

## THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND INC.

### ANNUAL REPORT ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL FOR 2018

It is my privilege to present this report on behalf of the Council to the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand to be held at Wellington on the 1st of June 2019. It has been an exciting year to be President of the Society. We have been focused on the development of the New Zealand Bird Atlas Project and the redevelopment of the Society's website.

#### **Deceased Members**

During the period of this report I have been notified of the deaths of the following members. If members are aware of others they should be brought to our attention.

Ashley Cunningham  
Carol Davies  
Colin Hill  
John Simmons  
Trevor Trought

#### **Council**

In 2018 Council met three times through the year. Meetings were held in Christchurch in October 2018 and March 2019. Council also met as part of the AGM weekend at Paihia in June. Additionally, we have conducted a large amount of business by email.

Council continues to work on the preparation of Health and Safety Resources to ensure that field trips are safe for members. The Society's Policy is now completed, and we have continued to develop a hazard register for Regions to use as part of the preparation for trips.

Council wishes to reiterate that to members must realise that the leader of the trip has full responsibility for safety, and that participants must abide by decisions if the leader consider that the risks to the group or an individual is are too great.

We have continued our work to increase the profile of the Society, to develop relationships with key partners, particularly Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and, to critically evaluate how to build the Society.

The development of the New Zealand Bird Atlas scheme has been the result of a very productive relationship with Wildlife Management International Limited. It is expected that this will continue as the scheme moves from development and launch into delivery and reporting. The development of the Atlas Project has also allowed for opportunities to develop new partnership to be advanced.

Council has continued to meet with the Regional Representatives as part of the annual conference weekend. A Young Birders representative and the local Regional Representative has attended each of our Council meetings. Sandra Wallace and Eleanor Gunby have both contributed to our meetings.

Earlier in 2019 I received a resignation letter from Denise Fastier as the Secretary of our Society due to a change in her personal circumstances. This was accepted with regret. I'm very grateful to Sandra Wallace and Raewyn Empson for filling in at Council meetings and to Peter Gaze who has agreed to act as Secretary for this AGM. Council will be advertising for a permanent replacement as part of the annual nomination process.

The terms of Council members Helen Taylor, Colin Miskelly and Sharon Alderson ends with the conclusion of this AGM. As set out in the rules, nominations were called for and we received nominations from Josie Galbraith, Eleanor Gunby and Colin Miskelly. Helen had accepted a position with the Royal Edinburgh Zoological Society and has emigrated from New Zealand and Sharon has indicated that her professional responsibilities are such that she did not wish to restand. I wish to recognize Helen's hard work and leadership on the Council to develop the rebranding of the Society and to lead the development and specification of a new website. Sharon has been equally industrious in developing the resources for Youth Camps and has shown that good quality resources for our young people can be created and implemented around the country.

Council members have been a very active and knowledgeable team in delivering the Council business.

### **Partners**

The key partners of the Society, the T-Gear Charitable Trust and Goodness Kitchen have continued their considerable financial support of our work. On behalf of all members, I wish to record our gratitude to the T-Gear Trust and Goodness Kitchen for their generosity to the Society over the past year.

The ongoing success of the Birds New Zealand Research Fund is a direct result of the support of the T-Gear Charitable Trust. In 2018 this fund enabled us to approve applications for fourteen projects. All were reported in the Birds New Zealand magazine and summaries are available on the Society's website.

Additionally, T- Gear asked the Society to facilitate a review of the status and current knowledge of the penguins of New Zealand. This work, completed by Thomas Mattern and Kerry-Jayne Wilson, has now been completed, peer reviewed and is setting the direction for future conservation and research work for some time to come on this important group of birds.

T-Gear support has also enabled us to make significant progress on the rebuild of the Society's website to get it onto a sustainable platform and to modernise it and improve functionality. This work is taking longer than intended as we have found that design and transfer of material from the old to the new is a bigger job than expected.

Through the generosity of the George Mason Trust the Society has continued to offer the David Medway Scholarship to be funded during the year and the indication is that this will continue into 2019.

### **New Zealand Bird Atlas Scheme**

As you will have heard during the first session of the conference this morning the Society has launched the New Zealand Bird Atlas Project. This would not have happened so promptly and professionally without the support of Wildlife Management International Ltd, particularly Mike Bell

and Nikki McArthur. Also, the ongoing support of Goodness Kitchen has enabled Council to have confidence that we can fund this work.

### **Te Reo name for the Society**

For some years, Council has been considering how we should present our Society in Te Reo. As reported in *Birds New Zealand* we consulted with some recognised experts in Te Reo and received a number of options to consider. After some debate, Council has agreed to adopt *Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa* as an alternate name for the Society in the Maori language. This is not part of the rebrand or logo project, but the result of a conversation that Council has had over a year or more that we should seek to present ourselves in both official languages of New Zealand. *Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa* contains elements of a flock or a collective, and the study of birds. It can be shortened to *Mātai Manu*.

### **Publications**

#### ***Notornis***

Craig Symes has been bedding into his role as *Notornis* editor after being confirmed in this role in June 2018.

Craig has reviewed the publication process which allows for the editor to focus on editorial tasks, while typesetting and layout of the journal is undertaken by the printers (Pivotal Print, Wellington). Craig has also reviewed the "Instructions to Authors" (including the online version).

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Council is continuing to promote two special editions of *Notornis* in the next two years. Keith Woodley is leading an update on the Shorebird study and Colin Miskelly is developing a significant summary of the ornithology of the Auckland Islands, which is the subject of a symposium at this Conference.

*Notornis* continues to be published on time which is a significant priority. As a result of this regularity we have received a 2018 Impact Factor for the journal which is 0.351. While this is relatively low at an international comparison it emphasises the local scale at which *Notornis* is relevant (i.e. ornithology in the southern Pacific). It is expected that this will create a greater appeal to academic researchers to publish in *Notornis*. However, *Notornis* needs you, the members to support your journal by submitting reports and short notes to make it a success.

I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of Jim Briskie who continues to maintain the on-line availability of *Notornis* papers.

#### **Birds New Zealand**

The *Birds New Zealand* magazine has continued under the editorship of Michael Szabo and he is firmly stamping his imprint on the magazine. He continues to produce a publication that we can all be proud of.

### ***Notornis* new author awards**

The recipients of the *Notornis* & Conference awards presented at the 2018 NZ Bird Conference in Waitangi were:

- *Notornis* Student Award: Laureen Little
- *Notornis* New Author Award: Ann-Kathrin Schlesselmann
- Conference Student Talk Award: Rebecca French
- Conference Student Poster Award: Lyndsay Rankin
- Conference People's Poster Choice Award: Megan Friesen

Council wishes to continue with these awards to not only promote the New Zealand Bird Conference but to provide an avenue for the best of the students and other new authors and presenters to be rewarded and celebrated for publishing their research in our journal or presenting it to members.

### ***Notornis* survey**

Council conducted an electronic survey of the membership to check in about the current expectations of the members regarding *Notornis*. The results will be published in full in a forthcoming edition of *Birds New Zealand*, but the take home message is that Society members who responded to the Survey still wish to receive *Notornis* in hard copy. Also, more disappointingly only about 1/3 of members responded to the survey. In this day engaging with members is relatively easy and cheap using electronic tools but to be effective we do need your responses.

### **Social Media**

Michael Szabo and Natalie Forsdick manage the Society's social media presence and Michael has reported that the *Birds New Zealand* Facebook page now has nearly 5,000 followers.

### **Membership Database**

There have been ongoing improvements to the membership data base to improve your interactions with it and to make the membership secretary's workload easier. Jill West reports that the new category of membership for family members has been successful in as much as the option for a family member to be independent or joint has simplified database management of these members. It has also eliminated the confusion of invoices having incorrect or duplicated amounts. The Society is now in the situation where a majority of members now have an email address. I encourage you to notify us of a new Email address as this helps to reduce our postage costs which will rise again on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2019. Renewals using the credit card payment facility has worked well and many members have taken advantage of this. Hopefully more and more members will use it.

### **Beach Patrol Scheme**

The steady work to digitise the database of *Birds NZ* beach patrol data has been completed and we are now able to start to analyse this important resource. Lloyd reports that there has been a slight increase in number of reports and the kilometres covered in 2018.

### **National Wader Count**

The biannual wader counts continue under the leadership of Adrian Riegen. As in past years these counts not only provide the only national overview in trends for New Zealand's domestic waders but also contribute to an understanding of the trends in numbers of the trans-equatorial waders that spend the austral summer in New Zealand. Adrian noted in his report that there was incomplete

nationwide coverage in January and February 2019 and so with gaps the data has lesser utility than is desirable.

### **Records Appraisal Committee**

The Records Appraisal committee continues its work with Colin Miskelly as Convener and Andrew Crossland, Ian Saville, Ian Southey, Alan Tennyson as members and Biz Bell as Secretary. Additionally, Paul Sagar is a co-opted member of the committee, and provides independent assessment of Unusual Bird Reports (UBRs) submitted by RAC members.

A total of 124 UBRs was received and assessed in 2018, which is the largest number of submissions received by the committee in a single year. Ninety-eight (79%) of these UBRs were accepted by the committee. One new species (Macquarie Island shag) was added to the New Zealand list.

### **Nest Recording Scheme**

I acknowledge Roger Sharp's ongoing commitment as the Convener of this scheme. As reported in previous years this scheme which is very much under-utilised by members with NO Nest Record Cards being submitted in 2018.

During the year Roger received two requests for data but the researchers found that there was so little recent data that it was not useful. This means that the Society and its members are missing opportunities to understand this aspect of bird behaviour.

### **Scientific Committee**

The current committee is comprised of Graeme Taylor (Convenor), Paul Sagar, Ralph Powlesland, David Melville and Helen Taylor. Helen has moved to the UK and resigned from the Committee. Graeme was pleased to be able to nominate Ilse Corkery of Whangarei to join the committee. Attempts to replace further members who wish to stand down are underway. The Scientific Committee is invaluable in providing assessment of application to the Birds NZ Research Fund. Additionally, during 2018 the Scientific Committee provided a peer review for the Penguin research review prepared by Thomas Mattern and Kerry-Jayne Wilson.

### **Checklist Committee**

The Checklist Committee is currently Alan Tennyson (Convenor), Colin Miskelly, Ricardo Palma, Trevor Worthy, Paul Scofield and Nic Rawlence. They have continued to assess published taxonomic changes that might affect information in the 2010 (4<sup>th</sup> edition) *Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand* and answer taxonomic questions from various sources. A full report for publication in *Notornis* that updates scientific and common names of New Zealand's birds since the publication of the 2010 *Checklist* is well-advanced and is intended for submission in 2019.

### **Moult Scheme**

Gillian Vaughan has settled into the role of Convenor of the Moult Scheme. Key items since the last report have included

- Obtaining the moult records from Ben Bell and beginning to understand what is in there and what is required to continue data entry. Ben's record keeping has been great however, it appears about a third of the records still need to be entered.
- Starting a written and pictorial guide to moult in waders, to sit alongside the Bell's passerine guide. To date this includes Wrybill and SIPO, more species will be added as we catch them!

Disappointingly no new records have been reported.

### **Liaison with the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society**

The Society and the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society have continued to cooperate jointly on matters of mutual interest. Ian Armitage has represented the Society in discussions including, engaging on the Pacific Islands Bird Conservation and Research Fund, and the Birds New Zealand Atlas project.

### **Young Birders**

Sharon Alderson has continued to build relationships with Young Birders. As part of this AGM, Council and Young Birders will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding. Since 2018 a further successful camp has been organised and held in the Marlborough Sounds. I thank Kirstin Ruwhiu and her team for hosting 16 students from around the country for a week of bird study. It is clear that we have an ongoing demand for these camps, and Council will work to fulfill this

### **Birds New Zealand Library**

Trina Smith is active as Librarian and is mainly engaged in supporting the journal post-out. This facility which enables members to access ornithological journals from around the world continues to operate with annual subscription costs maintained at \$5 per annum per journal. Trina reports that only a small proportion of Birds New Zealand's members utilise the library and round-robin patronage remains static at approximately 50 persons.

### **Financial Matters**

Paul Garner-Richards continues to work hard as the Society's Treasurer. The accounts for the 2018 year are with the reviewer and it appears that the review will not be completed before this AGM. The 2018 accounts will be considered as far as we can under the Treasurers report.

Council has long term concerns about the financial sustainability of the Society. To be able to have a better picture of what the long term state of our funds is and to be able to ensure that we are making good use of our funds, council has resolved to establish a Finance sub-committee with the functions of:

- Identifying issues and risk with respect to the Society's Finances
- Developing a multi-year budget for the Society to enable planning of Society income and expenditure.
- Investigate the most appropriate sustainable business model for the Society to manage against.

This subcommittee will remain active until these and other relevant issues are addressed to ensure that the Society remains robust.

### **Regional Representatives**

One of the highlights of my year as a Councillor for Birds New Zealand and now as President is to read the Annual reports from the Regional Representatives. Collectively these show the wide range of activities that are happening across New Zealand. Whether it is the ongoing contributions to the Beach Patrol Scheme or the Wader counts or other more Regionally based projects, the different

projects show that as a Society we are actively engaged in ornithology. We have projects that support other conservation and land management groups as well as more direct studies of birds. These are all a direct result of the work of the Regional Representatives. Council recognises that the Society would not work without the ongoing work of the Regional Representatives, and so on behalf of Council; a big thank you to you all.

### **Rebranding Exercise**

Since last year's report, Shaun Lee has continued his amazing hard work to develop the new logo and the associated branding materials to support it. The new logo now has pride of place on the front cover of the *Birds New Zealand* magazine and at the top of the Birds New Zealand Facebook page. As you can see, we are rolling out the new logo and associated resources to give the Society a new consistent profile. I'm very pleased with progress and expect that we will continue to bed in this new look for the Society in the years to come.

### **Acknowledgements**

On behalf of the Council, the regional representatives and the membership as a whole I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of our Executive Officer, Ingrid Hutzler. Always prompt with responses to queries and answering correspondence Ingrid definitely makes the organisation work more smoothly.

I would also like to thank all the members of Council who undertake their roles on a voluntary basis. There is a lot going on and the Council has a large amount of business. In particular, Ian Armitage as Vice President is undertaking many tasks of representing the Society in Wellington which is of great benefit to the whole Society.

Bruce McKinlay  
On behalf of Council