

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

Wellington Region Newsletter

OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

June 2018

<http://osnz.org.nz/> and

<http://notornis.osnz.org.nz/>



Birds New Zealand

Greetings

I have just returned from a most enjoyable and well-run Birds New Zealand Conference (AGM) in the Bay of Islands. While the weather even in the Bay of Islands was not great I did manage to have a most enjoyable two-day field trip in the far North. Wellington was well represented at the conference with presentations by our local members, Colin Miskelly, Johannes Fischer, Murray Williams, Michelle Bradshaw and Troy Makan. Next year the conference (AGM) will be held in Wellington and help will be required from local members in the running of the conference. Details of the Wellington Conference will be revealed to members as planning for 2019 progresses.

The start of the Wellington Harbour Survey has been delayed a month for an August 12th start. The delay will enable time for some training as well as ensuring having a group of volunteers to cover all sections.

Geoff de Lisle

Wellington Regional Representative

Regional Representative: Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929 or osnzwelly@gmail.com

Regional Recorder: Nikki McArthur nikki.mcarthur.101@gmail.com

Birds New Zealand Regional Roundup: Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop (04) 527 0929
osnzwelly@gmail.com

Wellington Harbour Survey – Geoff de Lisle

Mist netting – Matu Both, manager@ngamanu.co.nz Nga Manu, Waikanae

Ross Pickard ross.pickard@hexagonsi.com Wellington Zoo

Upcoming Monthly Meetings WHERE and WHEN

Meetings are held at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps/ramp and across the carpark.

WHERE and WHEN:

The meeting is held on the first Monday of the month at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps and across the parking area to the door.

Monday 2nd July Alan Tennyson, Extinct species of birds recently described from New Zealand. Alan Tennyson is Curator of Vertebrates, Te Papa

Monday 6th of August Colin Miskelly will talk on his 2018 trip to the Auckland Islands. Colin and Alan Tennyson were members of a 3-week expedition to the Auckland Islands. A preview of their travels can be read on a Te Papa blog <http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/02/09/wildlife-highlights-of-disappointment-island/>

Monday 3rd September Hugh Robertson, 25 years of management of Kakerori *Pomarea dimidiata* a Cook Island endemic species.

April Meeting. Taxonomic status, ecology, and conservation of the South Georgian Diving Petrel in New Zealand, Johannes Fischer

Johannes's talk covered some of the results of the studies he is currently undertaking for his PhD on the South Georgian Diving petrel whose remaining breeding colony is on Codfish Island (Whenua Hou). Previously there were breeding colonies of South Georgian diving petrels on the Chatham Islands and Auckland Islands. The New Zealand South Georgian diving petrel is critically endangered with a population estimates of only 150. This is in marked contrast to South Georgia where there are 2,000,000 breeding pairs. An important part of Johannes's studies has been to show from phenotypic and DNA investigations that the New Zealand population is sufficiently different to be a distinct species (Details of study available below in Plos One paper). Another aspect of Johannes's studies has been the assessment of the terrestrial threats to South Georgian diving petrels on Codfish Island. It should be noted that Codfish Island has been free of predators, including weka for 18 years. The New Zealand South Georgian diving petrel are shoreline foredune specialists with nest sites on the beach sand dunes which are potentially vulnerable to erosion from storms. Trail cameras were found to be of limited value as they missed many of the visits to burrows which detected tagged birds by RFID readers. The importance of Johannes's studies is that by a better understanding of the biology and breeding of the New Zealand South Georgian diving petrel steps may be identified which will lead to steps being taken to ensure the survival of this critically endangered species.

Fischer, J. H., Debski, I., Taylor, G. A., & Wittmer, H. U. (2017). Assessing the suitability of non-invasive methods to monitor interspecific interactions and breeding biology of the South Georgian diving petrel (*Pelecanoides georgicus*). *Notornis*, **64**(1), 13-20.

Fischer, J. H., Chambon, J., Debski, I., Hiscock, J. A., Cole, R., Taylor, G. A., & Wittmer, H. U.. (2018). Buffering artificial nest boxes for Procellariiformes breeding in exposed habitats: investigating effects on temperature and humidity. *Notornis*, **65**(1), 35-41.

Fischer, J. H., Hjorsvarsdottir, F. O., Hiscock, J. A., Debski, I., Taylor, G. A., & Wittmer, H. U.. (2017). Confirmation of the extinction of South Georgian diving petrels (*Pelecanoides georgicus*) on Enderby Island. *Notornis*, **64**(1), 48-51.

Fischer JH, Debski I, Miskelly CM, Bost CA, Fromant A, Tennyson AJD, et al. (2018) Analyses of phenotypic differentiations among South Georgian Diving Petrel (*Pelecanoides georgicus*) populations reveal an undescribed and highly endangered species from New Zealand. PLoS ONE 13(6): e0197766. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197766>

May Meeting. Dispersal of red-crowned parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*) from a fenced mainland sanctuary, Ellen Irwin

Ellen's talk was based on her study of kakariki (red-crowned parakeets) at Zealandia as part of her masterate studies. Her studies had two major foci, breeding biology and dispersal. An analysis of breeding from 2010/11 to 2015/16 revealed 74% successful breeding (at least one fledgling per nest) and the number of fledged birds was approximately half that of the number of eggs laid. Overall seasons, 2.85 birds were fledged per breeding pair. A total of 22 recently fledged kakariki were fitted with transmitters and tracked. On average birds left their natal areas at 80 days of age. Of the 22 tracked birds, 11 permanently left the sanctuary and three of them were killed (cat, rat and avian predator). A further 2

birds were probably killed by predators but their transmitters could not be retrieved. This loss of birds occurred within a few months of leaving the sanctuary. Post fledging dispersal was male biased, perhaps to avoid inbreeding. Males dispersed further (1.34 km versus 0.63) than females and distance dispersal decreased with increasing body condition. Kakariki outside the sanctuary predominantly foraged in reserves and other forested areas with totara, five-finger, Mapou and large-leaved Muehlenbeckia being particularly favoured. More details of Ellen's study can be read in her thesis;

Breeding biology and post-fledging dispersal of red-crowned parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*) translocated to a fenced mainland sanctuary <http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/handle/10063/6252>

The development of food-caching behaviour in North Island robins (Petroica longipes), Latu Clark

Latu's talk was based on her masterate studies on brood division and the caching behaviour during the post fledging period of the New Zealand robin. The robin is an ideal subject for behavioural studies because human presence does not alter its daily activities. Field observations revealed that brood division occurred at the time young left the nest. The male parent typically cared for male and larger fledglings while the female parent cared for the female and smaller fledglings. A study during a 12 week period following fledging in 34 robins showed;

- Robins started caching shortly after achieving foraging independence, ~5 weeks post fledging.
- Caching rates increased gradually with age.
- Retrieval began as soon as caching.
- Retrieval rates remained constant throughout development.

These results suggest that caching is innate behaviour but age and experience have an important role in the development of adult caching behaviours. The caching behaviours in New Zealand robins are similar to those of northern hemisphere birds which demonstrate brood division and caching. Further details of Latu's studies can be found in the following link,

Brood division and the ontogeny of caching behaviour in the North Island robin (*Petroica longipes*) https://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10063/6255/thesis_access.pdf?sequence=1

East Harbour Banded Dotterels

The study by MIRO of the Eastbourne and Lake Kohangapiri beach banded dotterels will continue for the 2018/19 breeding season. After the breeding season the banded dotterels leave their nesting areas but it is not known where they go during winter. Please keep an eye out for banded dotterels with flags which contain a 3 letter identifier. Currently only one flagged bird has been seen beyond Eastbourne and the beaches at the outlets of the Pencarrow Lakes. A male bird banded/flagged on Eastbourne beach was seen on the 25th of June amongst a group of 30 banded dotterels on the mudflats at Pauatahanui.



A.T. Edgar Junior Award – George Hobson

Two Junior awards were made in 2018, Eleanor Gunby from Canterbury and George Hobson, Wellington. The two requirements for the award are, making valuable contributions to the study of birds in the New Zealand region and a member of Birds New Zealand under the age of 20. The following is the nomination for George.

George contributes both locally and nationally to the study and enjoyment of birds.

In the Wellington Region he is an active contributor to ongoing research, for example the collaborative study of banded dotterels initiated by MIRO (Mainland Island Restoration Operation) and supported by the Wellington branch of Birds New Zealand.

During the breeding season he carried out one to two weekly-visits to identify nests, record their locations using GPS, and determine breeding success. He has also assisted in the banding and flagging of chicks and adults. While the project still has 2-3 years before it is completed it has already identified successful nesting, but few chicks surviving till they fledge. In this project George has demonstrated a range of birding skills which have greatly contributed to the success of this project. He also ran the "Bird of the Year" campaign for banded dotterels again this year.

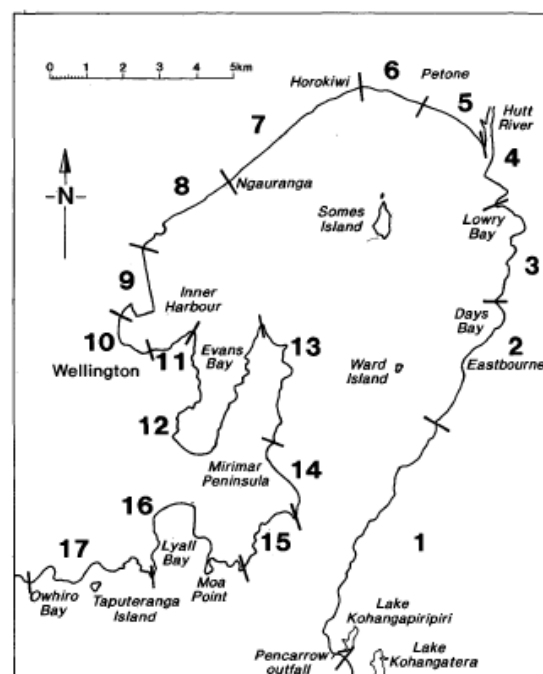
George is also working to make birding and participation in studies like this more available to young birders nationally. He also shares his knowledge with non-birders, regularly guiding trips at Zealandia sanctuary in his role as a Zealandia Ambassador.

He is the co-ordinator of YoungBirdersNZ and has attended BirdsNZ council meetings by invitation for the past two years to provide a youth perspective on society matters. George is currently co-designing a Memorandum of Understanding between BirdsNZ and YoungBirdersNZ to formalise arrangements between the two organisations.

Wellington Harbour Survey

The start of the new Wellington Harbour survey has been postponed until Sunday August 12th to enable training for some of the participants and to ensure all the necessary planning has taken place. The survey will take place on the second Sunday of each month between 1.00pm and 3.00pm and run for 24 consecutive months. The protocol for the survey will be the same as for the previous surveys which date back to 1975.

Further details will be emailed to members. The success of this survey depends on having a dedicated group of volunteers. New volunteers are welcome and training will be provided. Contact Geoff de Lisle osnzwelly@gmail.com



Birds New Zealand Youth Camp, 2018 – George Hobson

The 2018 Birds NZ Youth Camp was in beautiful Southland, including Stewart Island, and I was lucky enough to be one of the 22 participants.

The trip for me started on the 17th of April when an excited group of four of us met up in Wellington Airport, at 8am for our nice and early plane, which left without incident, despite it being Jetstar! On arrival in Dunedin, we met Lloyd (camp organiser) and embarked on the 2.5-hour journey to Invercargill, where we were staying the first night. In Invers, while waiting for the later group, we went and did a beach patrol on Oreiti Beach. The highlight was a (sadly dead) Yellow-eyed Penguin.

That evening the whole group headed over to Lloyd's house and we had a chat about the plan for the week. It all sounded great! Now... Bed time.....

Day two started early, with myself and a few others heading down to the Bluff wharf at 7.30am for some birding. Literally we arrived, I got out of the car and what did I see wheeling just there in the harbour? A Buller's Albatross! That was quickly followed up with both White-capped and Salvin's Albies, and Sooty Shearwater. But my highlight wasn't a tubenose, oh no, it was the very humble Foveaux Shag! We saw a good number flying around the wharf.



The ferry crossing was a bit dicey - I can only guess the swells would have been 4-6m. It did however have good numbers of Sooty Shearwater, along with those same Albies, and the highlight, a **White-headed Petrel!!**

As we disembarked onto Stewart Island, we quickly experienced all possible weather. It was nice and sunny when we arrived, and by the time we got to our accommodation it had started hailing. Hard.

Our first activity on Stewart was exploring Mamaku Point, a fully fenced sanctuary a 15min drive from Oban.

The track there left a bit to be desired. It was a baitline, so lots of nice mud and slippery hills kept us on our toes. The highlight was definitely seeing the amazing bush there, with such a beautiful understorey.

With a couple of other young birders, I walked back to Oban to get a proper experience of Stewart Island and wow it's pretty. Not too many birds, but good numbers of: Kaka, Kakariki, Tui, Bellbird and more.

That evening we did a few different walks, firstly out to Acker's Point, which was quiet apart from a single grounded Sooty Shearwater and a Little Penguin coming ashore. Secondly, with only a small group, up to Trail Park to spot Southern Tokoeka, which we did!!

Day three had two very exciting activities planned. Firstly, for the morning we headed off to Ulva Island, where we were a bit shocked by the lack of birds, maybe because of the time of year. One lucky group got a diurnal Tokoeka. Everyone else got pretty similar stuff including: **South Island Saddleback, Yellowhead, Brown Creeper, Weka, Stewart Island Robin, & both Parakeet sp.**

In the afternoon, we had our half day pelagic. Bumpy, but good fun. The species were as follows:

Sooty Shearwater 300
Snares Crested Penguin 1
Yellow-Eyed Penguin 2
Buller's Albatross 14
White-Capped Albatross 71
Southern Royal Albatross 4
Northern Giant Petrel 2
Cape Petrel 12
Prion sp 2
Procellaria sp 3
Common Diving Petrel (probably) 15
Spotted Shag 2
Foveaux Shag 49
Westland Petrel 2
Hutton's Shearwater 2

Day four was more chilled out, a few people went to Ulva Island, some went looking for seaweed. Michael,

Amber and I organised ourselves a personal tour with Rakiura Water Taxis (I want to plug them here, they're amazing). For \$25 pp we went and scanned for Penguins, hung out with some tubenoses and got close and personal with some Foveaux Shags.



That afternoon we split into groups to work with conservation groups around the island. I chose DoC, and as such, got to go and clean out some gutters. But! It was a beautiful track, and with some great people, so it was good fun.

In the evening, we went back up to Trail Park and had another go at Tokoeka, and amazingly, got them again. They're cool birds.



Day five was leave the island day, so we cleaned everything up, ate some breakfast and headed back to the wharf. Amazingly, there was a tired Cook's Petrel hanging out on the wharf. It was returned to the water by Ian Southey. The ferry ride was quiet with just normal species, as was the drive from Invercargill to Borland Lodge (our final accommodation).

However, on arrival to Borland, I spotted the most random thing, a Chestnut-Breasted Shelduck! Everyone got good views.

Day six had us on route to Milford Sound, the travel was pretty quiet until Monkey Creek, which had lovely Blue Duck and Kea. Unfortunately, no Rock Wren were seen at Homer Tunnel, despite our best efforts. We made it to Milford Sound and the scenery was lovely, as was the resident White Heron.

Our last day started early to get everything organised. Our first stop was Rakatu Wetlands, where we had Fernbirds up close, along with lots of waterfowl. The second stop was Nugget Point, which provided a nice sea watch, with good numbers of Albies, Shearwaters and a Northern Giant Petrel – but the highlight for me was the Otago Shags, as I had managed to tick both them and the Foveaux in the same trip!

And that was that. The end of camp. It felt like it'd been going forever and yet, no time at all.



Huge thanks goes to: Lloyd Esler for organising; David Thomas; Ian Southey; Phil Rhodes and Anne McCracken for being there to help run it; Sharon Alderson for coordinating people and Geoff/Birds NZ Wellington for financially supporting me to attend this camp.

Photographs – George Hobson

South Island tomtit, Northern Buller's mollymawk, sooty shearwater, White heron. Note; the sooty shearwater photograph has been included in NZBirdsOnline.

Taihape Street Names



While travelling through Taihape this year we could not help noticing the 'new' street signs. The above pictures are some examples. A little investigation revealed that in 1911 some people in Taihape decided to change the names of their streets from old British men's names like Albert, George and Edward to more appropriate names to reflect the beautiful landscapes and native bush that surrounded Taihape. By 1914 over 20 of the streets were named after a variety of native and introduced birds.

Fast forward a century and Etain McDonnell headed the project of creating the artistic birds to sit atop their street sign namesake. A group of local artists, aging from 12 to 90 plus years, produced designs on paper which were then went to a design company to be made into aluminium-based images. There are 55 different signs with some streets having multiple signs.

The birds selected for the street names included not only the obvious such as Tui, Kiwi and Kakapo but also, from a 2018 point-of-view, a few surprises. One such surprise was Linnet Street. There were several attempts to introduce Linnets (*Carduelis cannabina*) into New Zealand – Nelson (1862), Otago (1867, 68), Canterbury (1867, 68, 69) and Auckland (1865, 67, 69). By 1930 Oliver in the first edition of *New Zealand Birds* records that Linnet "became established in some localities but in others disappeared although, as it is easily over looked, it may be more generally distributed than has been recorded". Oliver recorded Linnet being present in the southern portion of North Island and Westland. The situation is further complicated by greenfinches referred to as Linnets. The latest published record of Linnet in New Zealand appears to be a sighting by N. MacDonald and G Acres on 10/11/53 on the Opihi River, Pleasant Point, Timaru. They reported 6 birds, including "at least three had deep crimson breasts and slight chestnut crowns". In the first checklist of New Zealand birds published in 1953 the status of Linnets in New Zealand was described as uncertain and it "is left on the suspense list until its presence in New Zealand is substantiated". In Oliver's second edition of *New Zealand Birds* (1975) Linnets are not mentioned.

Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop

References

Gill BJ et al., (2010) Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand; MacDonald N. (1954) *Notornis*, 252; Oliver, WRB,(1930, 1975) *New Zealand Birds*.



Each year the Cornell Lab in the USA organise a Big Day and invites birders from around the world to participate. This year the Big Day was held on the 5th of May and a record number of species were recorded. Observations are lodged in eBird and a world summary of the 2018 records is listed below. New records were established including a new Big Day record for the Wellington Region. George Hobson, Advait and Annette Harvey set the new record and recorded 66 species. This involved a considerable effort to record nocturnal species (Little spotted kiwi, brown kiwi and morepork) as well as a full range of other species which keep more sociable hours.

Wellington Big Day Record* – George Hobson, Advait & Annette Harvey

Mallard	New Zealand Kaka	Sacred Kingfisher
Little Penguin	Red-crowned Parakeet	White-faced Heron
Red-billed Gull	Tui	Canada Goose
Black-backed gull	New Zealand Bellbird	Australian Shoveler
White-fronted Tern	Grey warbler	New Zealand Grebe
Eurasian Blackbird	Whitehead	Australian Magpie
Fluttering Shearwater	North Island Saddleback	Eurasian Coot
Pacific Reef-Heron	Stitchbird	South Island
Welcome Swallow	New Zealand Fantail	Oystercatcher
European Starling	New Zealand Robin	Variable Oystercatcher
Common Chaffinch	Silver-eye	Banded dotterel
House Sparrow	Tomtit	Black-fronted Dotterel
Sooty Shearwater	Rock Pigeon	Eurasian Skylark
Australasian Gannet	Swamp Harrier	European Goldfinch
Dunnoek	Black Swan	Song Thrush
Paradise Shelduck	Gray Teal	Eastern Rosella
New Zealand Scaup	Great Cormorant	Graylag Goose
California Quail	Royal Spoonbill	Spotless Crake
Little shag	Australasian	Fernbird
Little Black shag	Pukeko	North Island Brown Kiwi
Pied shag	Pied Stilt	Little Spotted Kiwi
South Island Takahe	Spur-winged plover	Morepork
New Zealand Pigeon	Caspian Tern	

Notable misses – yellowhammer and greenfinch

*Observations lodged in eBird. An albatross sp. was seen so perhaps the record should 66 and a half?

	Species	Checklists	Participants
World	6,904	74,717	28,768

		SPECIES ▼	CHECKLISTS ▼
1	Colombia	1548	4903
2	Peru	1491	1585
3	Ecuador	1156	419
4	Brazil	1038	817
5	Venezuela	757	320
6	Panama	750	1306
7	Mexico	746	1087
8	United States	716	43060
9	Bolivia	700	178
10	Argentina	695	1178

Top New Zealand Big Day Observers

Top eBirders

BY SPECIES | BY CHECKLISTS Updated ~9 hr(s) ago.

1	Wildlife Management International Ltd	72
2	Michael Burton-Smith	71
3	Lei Zhu	68
4	Yue Cui	67
4	Dayna Davies	67
4	Adi-Grace mooar	67
7	BirdsNZ Canterbury	66
7	George Hobson	66
9	Annette Harvey	65
10	Mike Bell	61

66	New Zealand	130	404
----	-------------	-----	-----

Top eBirders

BY SPECIES | BY CHECKLISTS Updated ~3 day(s) ago.

1	Team @AdoptaBosque Panama	446
---	---------------------------	-----



This year's survey: 30 June - 8 July 2018

Details of the survey can be found at the following website

- <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/birds/garden-bird-surveys/taking-part>

2017 State of New Zealand Garden Birds

https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/165279/state-of-nz-garden-birds-2017.pdf

This summary contains some fascinating information and has recently has been subject of comment in the media. One statistic that has been highlighted has been the decrease in the percentage of silvereyes reported over 10 years of the survey. One explanation is that the actual numbers of silvereyes has not changed over the years but silvereyes have not moved into gardens at the time of the survey as there has been plentiful food supplies in other habitats.

Bird Snippets

Kaka Waikanae

Rosemary Heather, Sat Apr 7. Rosemary reports, "At about 9.30am I visited friends in Kakariki Grove, Waikanae. His street runs up to the reserve at Himitangi. I sat outside and listened to kaka calls in the bush behind their garden and watched one perched on the top of a dead tree. Three kaka have been there for about a month. Possibly a pair with a juvenile. They have been seen every day."

Cook Strait Ferry Crossing

Davidthomas » Tue Apr 10, 2018

I've just crossed the strait this morning during the storm and I must say it's been the best seabirding for a while. Lots of birds, with an interesting mixture of species, with a few summer species and the beginnings of a few of the winter species beginning to appear.

- 1 BROWN SKUA
- 2 Grey backed storm petrel
- 1 Northern Royal Albatross
- 1 Juvenile Campbell/Black-Browed Albatross (didn't see underwing)
- 15+ NZ White-Capped Albatross
- 15+ Cape Petrels (I didn't see anything but snares sub spp.)
- 2 short tailed shearwater
- 1 sooty shearwater (showing white wingflashes)
- 5+ Westland/White-Chinned Petrels
- 20+ Buller's Shearwaters
- 100+ Fluttering Shearwaters
- 5+ Huttons Shearwaters
- 100+ Fairy Prion
- 1 Possible Broad-billed prion
- 1 possible soft plumage petrel
- 20+ Common Diving Petrel

Just inside the sounds there was a large mixed flock of terns, with at least 10 Black-Fronted terns, and a single Arctic Skua, and quite a few gulls.

Worth getting out for a sea watch if you're in the Wellington area over the next two days I'd say! Cape Palliser would be pumping today, with surprisingly good visibility considering the storm. BirdNZ.net

Wellington City biodiversity

CMKMStephens » Sun Apr 15, 2018

Walking up the east side of the fence from Karori over to Pariwhero / Red Rocks (to find geckos and commune with the Pipits), spotted a Peacock that got itself inside the fence and clearly was looking for a way out. BirdNZ.net



Photo, Christopher Stephens

Fairy Prion Waikanae Estuary

Charlotte » Sat Apr 21, 2018

We went for a walk at Waikanae Estuary this afternoon, shortly after midday. We entered close to Hadfield Street entrance. Just into the first minute of our walk stumbled across this little chap who was looking exhausted and hanging out right by the path. He did a run and tried to fly but unsuccessfully at that point. We decided to leave him to it and he was gone by the time we walked back through.

We didn't get a great photo with his tail, so assumption on the ID - appreciate your thoughts. BirdNZ.net

Re: Fairy Prion Waikanae Estuary

Alan Tennyson » Mon Apr 23, 2018 12:27 am

I walked along Waikanae Beach yesterday and found 9 Antarctic prions and 4 fairys + a fluttering shearwater - all freshly dead, so there has been a bit of an Antarctic 'wreck' it seems. All the Antarctic looked to be young birds.

Welcome swallows – Pencarrow Lakes

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle Mon Apr 23, 2018. Flock of 75 plus welcome swallow by the road at the outlet to Lake Kohangapiripiri. On a return visit on the 9th of May the number of welcome swallow was in single figures.



Lowry Bay – Reef heron

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle Mon Apr 23, 2018. On the way back home from Pencarrow Lakes, reef heron on the rocks at the southern entrance to Lowry Bay. **Nina Woodman** saw a reef heron at the Seaview Marina on the 9th of June.



Fairy prion in Karori, Wellington

kimbirdley » Tue May 29, 2018

My friend found this dead prion in Karori, Wellington. What are the chances that they are breeding on the mainland in Wellington?

Also keen for some help with I.D. as my prion knowledge isn't great. Do we think it's likely to be a fairy prion. BirdingNZ.net

<http://inaturalist.nz/observations/12907658>

Note, Not a fairy prion most likely an Antarctic prion.

Pauatahanui Reserve – Fernbirds

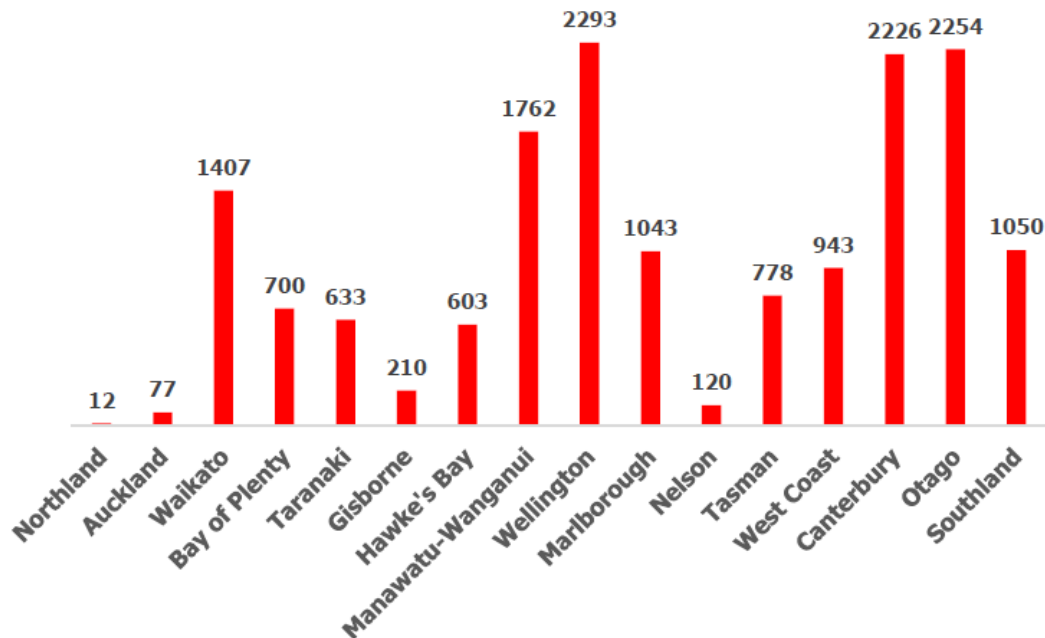
In April 2018 a further 25 fernbirds were released in the Pauatahanui Reserve. The source population for the birds was the same as for the first transfer namely, Lake Rotokare, a predator-proof-fenced reserve in the Taranaki. This is a Forest and Bird project with the transfers being managed by Kevin Parker a conservation biologist who has specialised in translocation biology and ecological restoration. The transferred birds were all individually colour banded as well as having black/metal combination to distinguish them from the first transfer which all had a red/metal combination. . Wellington Birds New Zealand is helping to monitor these birds. Please send me your observations. Note the unbanded birds are locally bred birds from the 2017/18 breeding season. Geoff de Lisle osnzwelly@gmail.com



Photo, unbanded fernbird, Pauatahanui Reserve, 25th of June, 2018.

Falcon Sightings

The 15th newsletter of the New Zealand Falcon Survey has recently been published. The entire newsletter can be seen on the following link <http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/uploads/NZ-Falcon-Survey-Newsletter-No-15.pdf> . The survey was initiated under auspices of the now defunct Raptor Association of New Zealand and has continued as the New Zealand Falcon Survey <http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/home> . The survey was started in 2006 and has now amassed over 16,000 records. Wellington has now taken over first place as the region with the most sightings.



Falcon sightings by Region, 2006-2018.

Falcon sightings can be lodged directly with the New Zealand falcon survey <http://www.nzfalcon.org.nz/nz-falcon/report-observation-of-nz-falcon/online-observation-report> or using eBird. Please note if you are reporting observations on eBird include all relevant information such as immature / adult, sex, evidence of breeding and description of prey. While there are a pleasing number of observations of falcon in the Wellington region there are relatively few reports of breeding and location of nests. Breeding information will provide a better insight into the number of falcon present in our region.

Acknowledgement; Thanks to Dave Bell for permission to include excerpts from the New Zealand falcon Newsletter.

How Birds Got their beaks, <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-43981165>
Evolution of birds from dinosaurs, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4nuWLd2ivc>

Long Live Banding – and Banders

Banding in New Zealand is managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). They have an informative website which contains much valuable information - <https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/bird-banding/> The Banding Office produces an informative electronic newsletter which can be found on their website. The following is an extract from their latest newsletter.

“Manaaki Barret from Kapiti Island Nature Tours recently reported sighting a metal banded kaka. A nice story was made more interesting when the banding records showed this male kaka (L-26822) was banded as a juvenile on 23/04/1991 on Kapiti Island. At 27 years, this makes it the oldest known kaka.” The kaka was banded by Ron Moorhouse while he was doing his PhD studies on Kaka on Kapiti Island. The full report can be seen at

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/our-work/bird-banding/banding-newsletter-apr-2018.pdf>

Nick Fisenzidis the DOC ranger on Kapiti Island in 2016, recorded the band combinations of three Kaka at Rangatira. Kaka are regular visitors to the Red House at Rangatira which for many years was the residence for DOC rangers. For many years kaka were fed by DOC staff and visitors on Kapiti. This is now banned but may be the reason why the banded kaka visit the Red House. However, kaka appear to be intrigued by the activities of DOC staff in the Red House even though they do not get fed.

Bands Recorded 2016.

L26805,	Banded 30/1/1989 as a juvenile male by Ron Moorhouse. Old Yellow, pictured.
L26809,	Banded 2/2/1989 by Victoria University Team.
L28033,	Banded 24/5/1993 as a juvenile male by Brian Lloyd (OY-M)

Ron Moorhouse carried out his PhD studies from 1988 to 1992 on Kapiti Island. His studies focused on measuring the reproductive success of kaka on offshore islands with and without predators. *Productivity, sexual dimorphism and diet of North Island Kaka (Nestor meridionalis septentrionalis) on Kapiti Island* **RJ Moorhouse** - Ph. D. Thesis, 1996 - Victoria University of Wellington. Ron is a free-lance conservation consultant and is currently working with the conservation of kaka as part of Project Jazoon in Abel Tasman National Park.



Dallas Bishop and I in the last few years have spent time on Kapiti Island as volunteers for DOC. We observed Old Yellow (L26805) on the 22nd March 2018 which means that he is now 29 years old. Lots of photographs were taken of this bird to get the complete combination. We also observed another bird with a white band as well as a metal band (pictured below).

Unfortunately we were unable to get the complete

combination of this bird.

Geoff de Lisle

Acknowledgements; Thanks to Michelle Bradshaw, DOC to reproduce excerpts from the Banding Newsletter, Nick Fisenzidis DOC for his kaka observations.



Alfie – Zealandia Ambassador Kaka. While Alfie is probably the most famous kaka in New Zealand and has his own Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/alfiethekaka/>) he is still comparatively a youngster. Alfie was born on October 29, 2000 and was one of Zealandia's founding kaka, part of the small number of kaka transferred to ZEALANDIA in 2002. In total fourteen captive-bred kākā were transferred from zoos between 2002 and 2007.

Te Papa Blogs



The petrels of Rangatira Island, Chatham Islands

11 April 2018 by [Colin Miskelly](#)

Rangatira Island is world famous for its immense seabird colonies. Te Papa bird expert Colin Miskelly recently took leave to join a Department of Conservation team focussed on black robin and Chatham petrel recovery programmes on the island. Much of the Chatham petrel work was undertaken at night, providing an opportunity to

observe related species that breed on the island in their millions.

<http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/04/11/the-petrels-of-rangatira-island-chatham-islands/>

The littlest snipe

9 April 2018 by [Colin Miskelly](#)

Te Papa bird expert Colin Miskelly first visited Rangatira Island Nature Reserve in the Chatham Islands as an undergraduate student studying snipe in 1983. He recently returned to the island as a volunteer for the Department of Conservation, and was delighted to renew acquaintance with one of his favourite birds.

<http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/04/09/the-littlest-snipe/>

Friends of Mana Island

The latest newsletter from Friends of Mana Island is available at the following website. <http://manaisland.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FOMI-Newsletter-April-2018.pdf>

Highlights include;

- An April trip to Mana Island resulted in a record number of 96 sooty shearwater chicks being banded.
- A recent survey of fluttering shearwaters a 33% survival of all 3 translocated chick cohorts combined. A total of 25 chicks were banded this season.

Friends of Mana Island are planning to translocate fernbirds and white-faced storm petrels.



THE HUNTERS

The Precarious Lives of New Zealand's Birds of Prey

By [Debbie Stewart](#)

This book was published in May 2018 and has great photographs complemented with an authoritative text.

Far North Field Trip On the Monday of the Conference Dallas and I joined 11 others on a two-day field trip to the far North. Our hosts were Lois Wagener and Kevin Matthews who were drivers of two of the 4-wheel drive vehicles with John Cockrem piloting the third vehicle. The trip started at 8.00am leaving from Waitangi heading north to eventually arrive at Cape Reinga. On the way we stopped at various birding sites. A major highlight was a visit to Unahi Road where Royal Spoonbills congregate during the winter. For our visit the Spoonbills were in a paddock which precluded an accurate count. However, as can be seen from the photograph an estimate of greater than 600 seems reasonable. Interestingly the Royal Spoonbills are winter visitors to the Far North and head south in spring to breed.



Also on Unahi Road a couple of small egrets were seen, one was definitely a cattle egret. Good views of the other egret were not



possible but it appeared to have a greyer beak, unlike the yellow of a cattle egret. We also stopped at Houhora where there were more spoonbills but this time only ~130 (photograph). At Cape Reinga we stopped at the lighthouse and Tapotupotu Bay where a banded rail was



90 Mile Beach – 32 km, 5/6/2018	
3 pied shags	1 Australasian harrier
46 SIPO	41 VOC
4 NZ Dotterels	123 Black-backed gulls
9 Caspian terns	46 White-fronted terns
7 Kingfishers	3 Starlings
2 Mynas	4 Pipits
6 Chaffinch	

out in the open on the grass by the beach. Also of note were three New Zealand dotterels on the beach. After lunch at the beach we headed south to Kaitaia. Back to the motel at Kaitaia and then off to Church Road in search of barn owls. Kevin Matthews has a wealth of experience observing the barn owls in Kaitaia. He took us on a short trip over some paddocks to reach the nesting tree. Finally after a relatively short wait (~20 minutes) Kevin heard an owl emerge from the nesting tree and revealed it with his torch sitting on a fence post. There may be nesting up to four pairs of barn owls in Northland. The following morning we headed up 90 mile beach to Maunganui Bluff for more birding, including keeping an eye out for dead birds. The beach patrol yielded a penguin, black-backed gull and a black swan. Lois provided morning tea complete with home-baked scones and muffins. We then headed back down the beach with a stop at the shell middens and over to Houhora Heads for lunch. An added bonus was a visit to the old Subritzky/Wagener homestead, guided by Lois and her husband.

A wonderful trip - some good birding, good company and expert local knowledge provided by Lois and Kevin. Many thanks to Lois and Kevin for hosting this trip and somehow avoiding the worst of the inclement weather of Queens Birthday weekend. Geoff de Lisle