



TŌREA PANGO

NELSON BRANCH BIRDS NZ. NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 15. Sept/ Oct 2024.

I was away for the September meeting (sadly I had to look at Birds of Paradise in PNG) and have possibly temporarily lost touch with some of the many things happening in our region. So, thanks to Kathryn who gave me a report of the meeting and to others who have sent items for inclusion. Hopefully not too many errors or too much missing. Anyway, the Godwits are back, as indeed are the shining cuckoos and we've survived another winter!

LAST MEETINGS

September 2nd

Twenty-five people attended this meeting at the Headingly Centre and others joined via the Zoom option. Items on the agenda were:

- Red Billed Gull update
- Fernbird Study update (Paul Fisher)
- Royal Spoonbill survey
- Avian Influenza Rob Schuckard
- Bird of the Year voting is open until 15 September
- TDC have employed a person to undertake a marsh bird survey at Waimea Delta-Pearl Creek.

October 7th

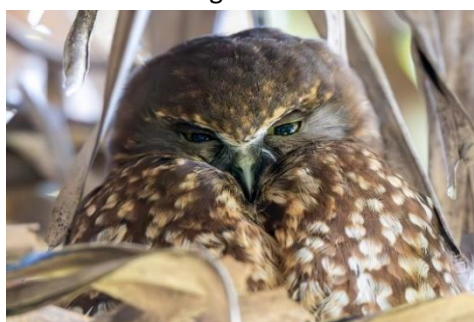
Twenty-three people attended the October meeting held in the Headingly Centre, run and organised by our 'deputy' - Kathryn Richards

- Kathryn reported on the "Godwit Walk"
- She also gave an excellent talk about her 3 trips to the Chatham Islands where she worked as a volunteer.
- Willie reported on a red-billed gull nest count on the Boulder Bank
- Report on wood ducks from Sharen Graham.
- Rob Schuckard reported on avian influenza in relation to "black iris" in gannets.

LATEST SIGHTINGS

Local

Sean McGrath who regularly posts on our Facebook page took these lovely Ruru pics. He says 'I accidentally woke up this wee cutie (Ruru /morepork) roosting in a nikau palm outside my house this morning. Then (s)he decided I wasn't too interesting and went back to sleep.'



Other local sightings include of course the influx of waders and shining cuckoo.

National

- Stilt Sandpiper, Waituna Lagoon Southland reported by sjacques » Sat Sep14th , 2024 11:29 am
- Sub-Antarctic Skua - South Bay Kaikoura. Reported by Steve Wood » Thu Sep26th 2024 6:31 pm
- Indian Ocean Yellow-nosed Albatross, The Petrel Station Reported by Michael Szabo Sept 23rd.
- Unusual Owl call reported in Westport region on Sept 27th (possible powerful owl????) Get your bush shirts on coasters -could be worth a look -or not?

RED BILLED GULL UPDATE (*Peter Gaze*)

While red billed gull colonies around the country are declining in size, our colony on the Boulder Bank seems to be bucking the trend. Two years ago, drone footage provided an all-time high count of c.2150 nests. This year we failed to get the drone to work but did manage a count of active nests on the ground. We reckoned on 1460 nests. David Melville had referred to a technique used in Britain where dry pasta spirals are counted into bags, a piece is placed in each nest and when back at home the remainder are counted. The original pasta count minus the leftovers should give us the nest count. The team of Willie Cook, Kevin Amyes, Maggie Atkinson and myself found the spirals worked well, meaning there was no need to keep a tally in your head and it was immediately apparent whether a nest had been counted or not.



Photos by Maggie Atkinson (definitely not Maggie Attwood-sorry for previous error!)

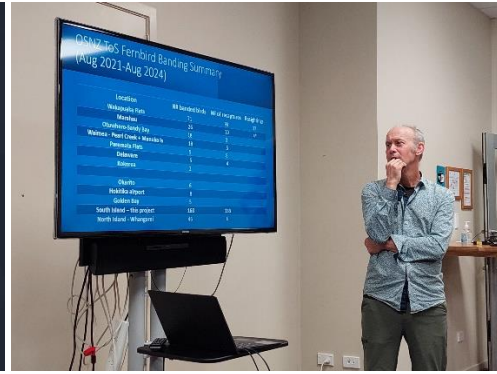
MĀTĀTĀ --S. I. FERNBIRD STUDY (*presented by Paul Fisher at Sept meeting*)

Report Kathryn Richards

Dr Paul Fisher who is a well-known and incredibly knowledgeable and enthusiastic scientist updated us on his 3 yearlong Mātātā SI fernbird study.

The study aims are:

- To describe their distribution, productivity and survival by individual colour banding
- To describe the moult sequence and other morphometrics to age and sex birds *to be able to estimate the breeding population and productivity.*
- Monitor the distribution of birds/banded sightings across the region (through EBird).
- Encourage NCC/community planting to increase habitat and trapping of predators.



Paul's study will run for at least 5 years to track individuals from hatching to breeding. Wakapuaka flats is the first study site with a total of 10 sites now in the South Island. A total of 168 birds have been colour banded with Wakapuaka flats also having the highest number of banded bird recaptures. Marahau, Otuwhero, Waimea-Pearl Creek-Manuka Island, Delaware and Kokorua are the other closest sites to Nelson. The Paremata flats population appears to be stable but persistently low despite a big effort with trapping and planting and is possibly a result of weka predation.

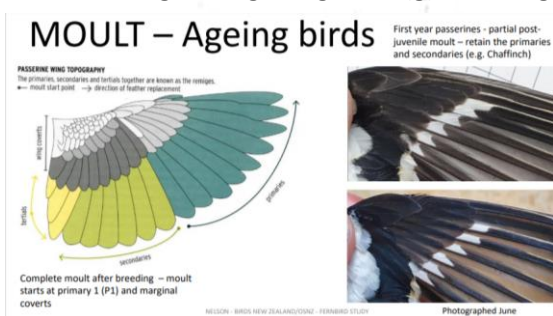
OSNZ ToS Fernbird Banding Summary
(Aug 2021-Aug 2024)

Location	NH banded birds	NH of recaptures	Resightings
Wakapuaka Flats	71	93	37
Marahau	26	20	4*
Otuwhero-Sandy Bay	18	3	
Waimea - Pearl Creek - Manuka Is	18	5	
Paremata Flats	9	8	
Delaware	5	4	
Kokorua	2		
Okarito	6		
Hokitika airport	8		
Golden Bay	5		
South Island - this project	168	133	
North Island - Whangarei	46	6	



To compare morphometrics between NI and SI birds Paul is now also monitoring sites near Whangarei where 46 birds have been banded to date.

Birds cannot be aged by moult alone but by a combination of factors including iris colour, tongue spots from hatching, sexing using mass (g) and wing (mm).



Wakapuaka flats' bird distribution area has declined 60% during the study period due to several factors including flooding during 2022, the impact of dogs, predators (e.g. harriers and animal) and seasonal shooting.

Paul's conclusion is that he is learning all the time!

BIRD OF THE YEAR

Well at least the hoiho isn't a bat or a subspecies of a bird found throughout Europe, Asia and Africa!

CONTACT UPDATES

This is currently the committee running the Tasman/ Nelson region plus some extra helpers.

- Kathryn Richards [0273515428] Vice Chair
- Alison Balance [027045739]
- Sharen Graham [0276112531]
- Paul Fisher treasurer [0272944493]
- Paul Bennett Newsletter [027454520]
- Pete Gaze meeting speaker [0274500179]
- Rob Schuchard scientist [0254518461]
- David Melville, Encyclopaedia of BirdsNZ and scientist [0221500237]

SUMMARY OF ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Busy, Busy! Lots going on. If you want to get involved here are your contacts.

- Fernbird Project/ moult study *Paul Fisher*
- Wood ducks *Rob Jones and Sharen Graham*
- Farewell Spit Monitoring Gannets *Rob Schuckard*
- Harrier banding *Paul Fisher*
- Caspian tern *Willie Cook*
- Black fronted tern breeding survey *Sharen Graham*
- Spoonbill Breeding survey *Jennie Edwards*
- Birding by Bike *Kathryn Richards*
- National shore bird surveys *Rob Schuckard*
- Monthly Trips to Motueka Spit
- Nest record schemes *Christine Grove*

NEW TREASURER REQUIRED-

Paul Fisher writes:

'Please include a request in the next Newsletter and meeting to ask if there is anyone in the group who is keen to take on the role as Treasurer ASAP. I will assist changing over signatories. I no longer have time for this and will be away for most of the next two months so will not be able to check the accounts regularly '

Many thanks Paul for the great job you have done and have a fantastic trip. So, there's a fab opportunity for someone! If you are interested in this role on a temporary basis until the AGM (with a fairly strong possibility of extension at that time!) please let someone on the committee know ASAP.

Looks like we might be needing a new RR too! At the time of writing Mark has indicated an intention to resign from this position.

DRAFT ITINERARY FOR MARLBOROUGH VISIT

As you are probably aware, following our birding visit to the Marlborough region earlier in the year, we are reciprocating the hospitality with a planned visit from the Marlborough group on the weekend of November 2nd and 3rd.

This is the draft plan/itinerary

Saturday 2nd

1) Motueka Sandspit (trip leader Mark Ayre TBC).

Meet 1000h opposite Motueka Golf Course on the coastal track near 177 Quay lane, Motueka, (junction of Motueka Quay and Staples Street) -41.112851, 173.028846

Bring lunch and a drink. You may get wet feet.

Finish 1.30-2.00 ish.

Coffee at Toad Hall Café SH60 near Wharf Road roundabout if desired. -41.132234, 173.009695

2) Mapua Playhouse ponds for Australian wood ducks and nest boxes,

Westdale Road,

Redwood Valley -41.277321, 173.074942

3) Hoddly Estuary Reserve for Australian wood duck nest boxes,

The Coastal Highway,

Redwood Valley -41.294974, 173.097427

Sunday 3rd

1) Nelson Wastewater Treatment Ponds. Paul Fisher

Meet at 0830 Paul to arrange access key and to guide please! Possibly also fernbirds.

2. Brook Waimarama Sanctuary

Orange fronted parakeet. 10.30 – 3.30 ish. There is an entry fee of \$20-\$25 for non-Nelson residents.

Bring lunch as there is no food available for purchase

at the Visitors' Centre. Southern end of Brook Street, Nelson City -41.31177342784723,

173.29243028364087

CONGRATS REBECCA BOWATER!



If you managed to listen to the news long enough to make it to the weather forecast on One News Sat Oct 5th, you would have seen Rebecca's fabulous godwit photo shown here. Apparently, 3rd time lucky!

MEMBER PROFILE --WILLIE COOK

Willie is of course well known to many of our members. But for those who have recently joined or haven't made it to a meeting for several decades, he's that wonderful Scottish bloke. I say Scottish but he's actually been a New Zealander for longer than most people in the club, arriving in 1961 (aged 23) from his Tayside home near St Andrews in Scotland after 2 years of army service. Willie can't remember a time when he wasn't fascinated by birds although his initial interest was at least partially culinary, and the Tay estuary was a wintering home to many species that found their way to his table. Willie reminisces of early years in Scottish pine woods, red squirrels, grouse, roe deer and keepers who shot everything that might eat a gamebird. Initially living in Rotorua, Willie moved onto his current 12-acre property on Eden's Road in 1968 where he started an orchard and became involved in the fruit industry. As with most of us there are times when birds have to take second place to work and family. However, it wasn't long before Willie met up with Dr Graeme Elliot who was researching aspects of the Waimea Estuary and together with Don Cooper started trapping to try and save a rapidly declining banded rail population. It's hard to imagine this now, in an era where we are fortunate enough to see traps set in so many areas, but back in the 80's the idea was being postulated that everything should be left alone as 'equilibrium' would eventually be reached!! Trapping was almost unheard of, and Willie ran into much negativity, with traps being destroyed. Thankfully the trapping of over 400 stoats has allowed banded rail and other species to survive and while not an everyday sight they are doing OK in our area. He says that one thing that truly makes him happy is the change in attitudes towards conservation and seeing the efforts from so many to help what we almost destroyed. Long may it last!

Willie of course has been involved in so much apart from banded rail. Retiring from horticulture he has volunteered with both the DSIR and DOC on many projects. These have taken him to such wonderful places as the Chathams, Antarctica, and Raoul Island. He is a level 3 bander and as well as netting and banding birds he has been involved with the translocation of several species. These

include yellow crowned kakariki and fluttering shearwater in the Sounds.

Of course, I had to ask a couple of daft questions -like 'what's your favourite bird?' Whatever I'm working with and focusing on at the time, even if it's a sparrow' came the reply. But he did confess to a soft spot for the wonderful Inca tern which he saw on a visit to Chile a few years back.

Willie is undoubtedly not a religious man, but should he find himself having to justify entry to a heavenly afterlife he will say 'Well I'm a member of the ornithological society and I have spent my life protecting and caring for your creatures '!

If you are wondering who to have a wee chat with over tea at the next meeting, you couldn't do better than spend a bit of time talking to Willie. A lovely bloke and an absolute wealth of information and stories of past and present. The photo shows Willie in action at the



recent, red-billed gull nest count (*photo credit Maggie Atkinson*)

SPOONING SPOONBILLS Jenny Edwards (Her title not mine!)

Hi to all Birds Nelson members!

Following our successful winter spoonbill census here's some info and a request regarding the next stage, which is a summer breeding colony and nest count:

- To date there have been no reports of spoonbill nests in our area so we are instead going to study the spoonbills (that have chosen not to fly off for the breeding season) to see if we can observe any breeding behaviour or nesting activity from November through to the end of January.
- The national coordinator is also keen that we note any immature birds that may have flown over here from Marlborough (I believe they have black wing tips).
- Our plan is for willing observers to adopt an area and keep an eye on any spoonbill activity, reporting anything of interest to me.
- I will also be going to the general public to raise awareness and attempt to cover more rural and private land. Please let me know if you have any useful contacts with local media or rural groups on Facebook etc.

This would be easier in person with a map but to get things moving below is a rough division. Feel free to offer part of or more than a suggested area.

- Cable Bay/Delaware Bay
- Inland Hira/Gentle Annie area
- Nelson Haven/Atawhai and Glenduan
- Port Nelson to Golf Course/ Airport area
- Monaco to Lansdowne Road
- Best Island/Bell Island area to but not including Rabbit Island.
- Rabbit Island/Rough Island area
- All those bays and peninsulas along the Redwood Valley/Bronte side
- The Mapua peninsular around to Ruby Bay cliffs
- Tasman/Kina and Moutere Inlet to end of Aporo Rd (Jacket Island?)
- Aporo Rd to and including Moutere River inlet
- Moutere River to Motueka River.
- Motueka River to Marahau - (Robin and Sandy).
- Abel Tasman Bays (will try and get a water taxi/tour company on board)
- Golden Bay - hopefully divided and ably coordinated by those over yonder!



Please email me (Jenny Edwards) to gardensings@gmail.com so I can start filling in the map.

TIME ON THE CHATHAMS *Kathryn Richards*

In 2017 I found myself volunteering on the Chatham Islands for the Taiko Trust for 5 weeks. Taking time out of my teaching career to pursue an urge to do something different that involved conservation and the outdoors.

I was fortunate enough to assist in one of the Chatham Island Albatross transfers from the Pyramid to mainland Chatham Island and to help with the feeding of the young Albatross. I was also involved in clearing traps on a daily basis in the Tuku reserve as well as planting trees to help establish the Gap colony area as a place to re-introduce seabird species behind a predator proof fence.

Living in the Taiko camp on the property of Liz and Bruce Tuanui provided a very comfortable base for all this work. Working on the Chathams is all about working out in the elements with it being very windy most of the time, wet and feeling a long way from anywhere. While out trapping in the reserve I encountered Parea/Chatham Kereru, Chatham warbler, Weka, Red crowned Parakeet while avoiding the wild pigs and sheep. I also got to see the Chatham Petrel and the Magenta Petrel, Taiko. I then returned to the Chathams and worked for Wildlife Management International in 2019 and 2021. On these trips I was part of the Sooty Shearwater transfers from Rangitira Island back to the Gap Colony. It was an amazing experience to be on such an Island and witness the seabird population. The noise at night as thousands of birds returned was something I will never forget. I saw Black Robin, Snipe, Chatham Is Oyster catcher, Sooty Shearwaters, Broad Billed Prion, Tui, White faced Storm Petrels, Shore Plover and the famous and large Rangitira spiders. Helping with feeding, weighing and measuring these birds provided me with a lot of hands-on skills and deepened my interest in birds. On these 2 trips we planted 1,000 of trees in the Gap Colony area. It is my wish someday I will get to return and walk through these trees that have grown in such a challenging environment. Hopefully with a seabird population thriving under their shelter finding their home here as they would have many years ago.

I think the highlights for me were landing on the Pyramid to collect the Albatross and getting to meet the dedicated people who work with the Taiko and Albatross. Lying in the dark and rain spot lighting in and banding a Taiko, working in the elements to plant trees and walking through the dense ferny bush to maintain the trap lines. Time spent away from family making me most grateful for the comforts of home and a desire to return.

Waimea Inlet Forum invites you to hear about the recovery of the Waimea River delta

WAIMEA INLET FORUM INVITATION

Put this one in your diary folks!

You are warmly invited to come and hear about the recovery of wildlife around Pearl Creek and the Waimea River delta.

Where:

Constance Barnicoat Room,
Richmond Public Library, Queen Street, Richmond

When:

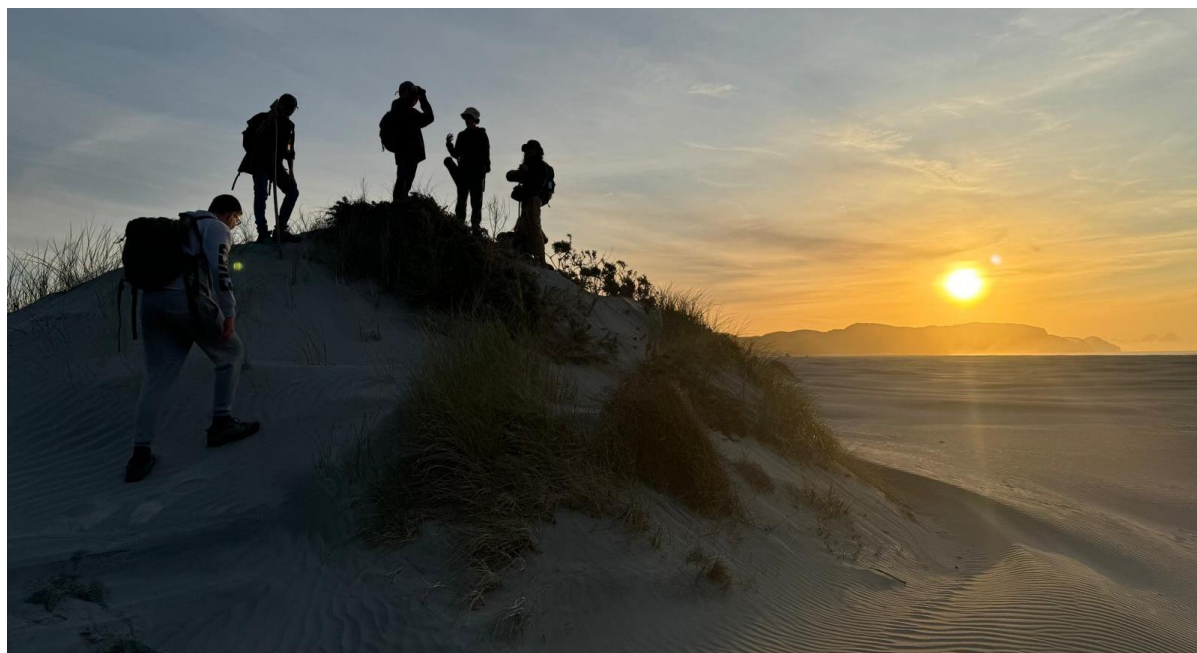
5.00 to 6.30 pm on Monday 4 November

The Tasman District Council, Waimea Inlet Forum, Tasman Environmental Trust, Battle for the Banded Rail, Forest and Bird, and Tasman Bay Guardians have all been working hard to restore the habitat in this area, and now their combined efforts are making a real difference.

These speakers will tell us how we've been getting on:

Paul Fisher on the fernbird surveys
 George Daly on the creation of bittern habitat
 Tracey Murray on the pest trapping
 Monique Patterson on the inanga habitat
 Free entry – All welcome.

NELSON TASMAN BIRD YOUTH CAMP 28 September – 4 October 2024– A BOOMING SUCCESS! Rachel Hufton



The first Nelson Tasman Bird Youth Camp held at Farewell Spit and Mangarākau Swamp was a “Booming Success!” The enthusiasm was astonishing and illustrated by the 77 species count with 253 EBird checklists. Highlights included dusk wader roost viewing experience at the iconic wetland site of International Importance Farewell Spit RAMSAR designation. Cape Farewell predator-fenced enclosure informative site visit with Health Post Nature Trust representative Marian Milne, with nesting diving petrel and fluttering shearwater. The starred gecko’s, oystercatcher leg-flag records (at least six), wood ducks, shining cuckoo’s, coast sea-watch, good food and company, end of camp quiz reaffirming learning from our time together. Dusk and dawn calls of “Booming bitterns”, fernbird, spotless crane, ruru and weka. With views of Australasian bittern flying over the swamp ridgeline as dusk approached. First stop was to see the rare Australasian wood duck on the way to our destination followed by good views of Australasian little grebe. Our first site visit was at the seabird fenced enclosure managed by the Health Post Nature Trust where mice have recently been removed.

Seeing future birders blossoming and developing their skill set plus a future entomologist Saryu Mae in action inspiring everyone and his undetermined drive to record moths and other taxa, each night of the camp. Saryu recorded 150 species of invertebrate and 200 plant species, all uploaded to iNaturalist! Chris Turton did an excellent job keeping us all nourished with her catering for the entire camp and all attendees contributed to food prep and domestic duties at both locations. Evening presentations on the ecological importance of these two important wetland locations were included and Bradley Shields was a great addition (as a former Bird Youth Camp attendee) helping with field

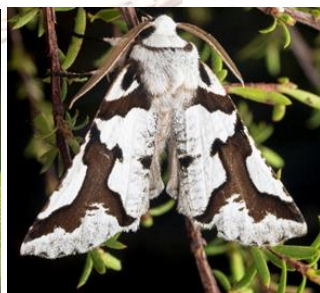
visits at Mangarākau and with his informative presentation on conservation work in action with ZIP on the West Coast. Mist netting installation practice challenged previous students and new ones enjoyed learning about NNBBS with interactive banding activities. The end of Camp quiz was received well with tough competition, Saul Ward was pleased with the winning prize of Keith Woodley's book on the Bar-tailed Godwit (a relevant souvenir to our long-distance bird migration learning from Camp).



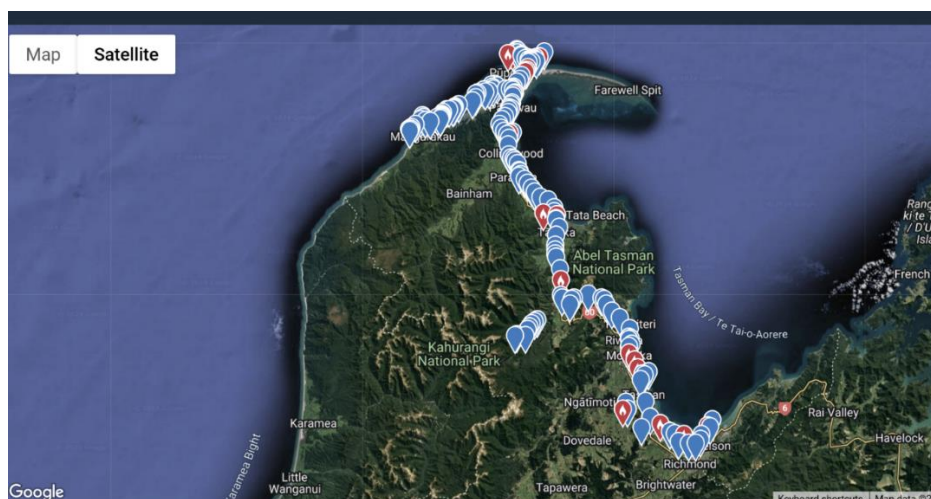
Camp organised and successfully delivered by Rachel Hufton and Mark Ayre. Rachel's second bird youth camp delivered for 2024. Thanks to Mark for his enthusiasm and his valuable time to get this



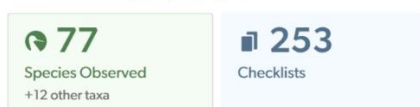
in action. Upcoming Youth camps include Makarora Jan 2026 and possibly a Sept/Oct 2025 location tbc! With thanks to enabling event supporters BirdsNZ, Nature Quest, Albatross Solutions, Health Post Reefton, Illuminate Ecology and Friends of Mangarākau.



Other fauna recorded during the event included a mānuka tree with five starred geckos and a South Island lichen moth *Declana egregia* a New Zealand endemic species, a new moth record for Mangarākau (Saryu Mae).



DATA FOR: Group (all people) ▾



EBird Trip Report For Nelson Tasman Bird Youth Camp Spring 2024

Attendee Commentary

The Youth Camp was awesome I learnt a lot about birds, bugs, and so much more. It was very fun!

Judha - Auckland

It was good birding in other locations with other people. I gained seven new lifers! The food was great!

Archer - Wellington

Exceeded expectations. Great experience fun and enjoyable. Met some new people and gained some nice lifers! The food was amazing!

Saul - Wellington

Super awesome experience, also meeting new likeminded people and learning new skills.

Sam - Tasman

I enjoyed it because of the different environments and new birds/calls we experienced, and I also loved the lizards.

Jamie – Christchurch

NELSON/TASMAN BIRDS NEW ZEALAND TIMETABLE OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES 2024-2025

This is the latest updated version.

2024			
October			
18-19		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

November			
2	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip – Sharen Graham	Meet 1000h Motueka Golf Course
3	Sunday	Visit by Birds NZ Marlborough	Contact Sharen Graham grajamsharen@gmail.com
4	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting –	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
15-17	Friday	Spring wader count	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
15-17		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
29-30		Cannon netting – Place to be decided	Contact david.melville@xtra.co.nz
		Royal Spoonbill breeding survey	
December			
2	Monday	BirdsNZ Christmas BBQ	Dovedale 1800h Contact david.melville@xtra.co.nz
1-7		Cannon netting – place to be decided	Contact david.melville@xtra.co.nz
18	Wednesday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1100h Motueka Golf Course
20-21		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
		Royal Spoonbill breeding survey	
T.B.C.		Caspian Tern chick banding	Contact david.melville@xtra.co.nz
2025			
January			
		NO BirdsNZ monthly meeting	
4	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip - Paul Griffiths	Meet 1200h Motueka Golf Course
17-18		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
February			
1	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip - Paul Griffiths	Meet 1100h Motueka Golf Course
10	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h

14-16	Friday	Summer wader count	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
14-16		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
March			
1	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip - Paul Griffiths	Meet 1030h Motueka Golf Course
3	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting– AGM	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
28-29		Gannet Survey 2024-25	rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
April			
7	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
19	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip - Paul Griffiths	Meet 1200h Motueka Golf Course
May			
5	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
31	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip - Paul Griffiths	Meet 1300h Motueka Golf Course
31	Saturday	BirdsNZ Annual Conference Auckland	
June			
1	Sunday	BirdsNZ Annual Conference Auckland	
2	Monday	BirdsNZ Annual Conference Auckland	
9	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
14	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1030h Motueka Golf Course
27	Friday	Winter wader count	Contact Rob Schuckard: rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

28	Saturday	Winter wader count	Contact Rob Schuckard: rschckrd@xtra.co.nz
29	Sunday	Winter wader count	Contact Rob Schuckard: rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

NOTES

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly meetings are held at the Headingly Centre, Richmond starting at 19:15h and ending at 21:00h. Details of speakers etc. will be circulated in advance.

Monthly meetings are usually held on the first Monday of each month (unless a public holiday gets in the way).

FIELD TRIPS

Regular field trips are organised to Motueka Sandspit – these are an ideal opportunity to meet likeminded people, hone your birding skills and get some exercise! The trips are scheduled for Saturdays to enable more people to participate, with high tide around mid-day. Meet at the car park at the north end of Motueka Quay Road, by the golf course. You may get wet feet. All welcome.

The region is starting a new project to examine eye colour of Australasian Gannets at the Farewell Spit colony in relation to possible exposure to High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza [HPAI] - in Europe some Atlantic Gannets exposed to HPAI have dark eyes. The project will run between August 2024 and March 2025. Trips will be overnight, staying at the old Lighthouse Keeper's house, with field work in the afternoon and following morning – examining birds, band reading and photographing individual birds. Spaces are limited. If you would like to participate, please email Rob:

rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

WADER COUNT

Wader counts are organised three times a year: February, June/July, November. If you would like to participate, please email Rob: rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

ROYAL SPOONBILL CENSUS

If you would like to participate, please email Jenny Edwards nbhctenor@gmail.com

WADER CATCHING and BANDING

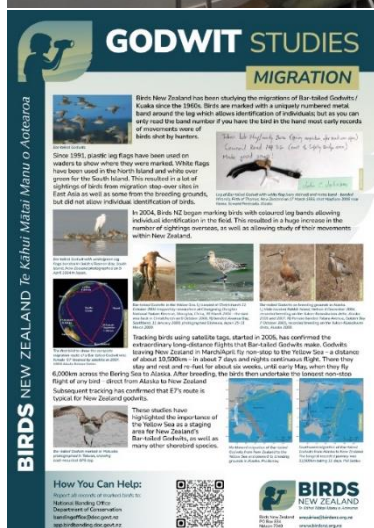
The branch periodically arranges catching and banding of waders. The schedule includes many possible catch dates, but this is to allow for cancellation due to bad weather, sites being inaccessible etc. If you would like to be included on the circulation list to receive further details of planned catches, please email David Melville: david.melville@xtra.co.nz.

UN REPORT: INSECT POPULATION DECLINE THREATENS MIGRATORY BIRDS

I haven't included the full article but follow this link for an interesting if disturbing read. The link was provided by David who of course has considerable involvement with the flyways project.

<https://eaaflyway.net/joint-press-release-world-migratory-bird-day-2024-october/>

MOTUEKA LIBRARY DISPLAY AND GODWIT WALK



As part of the "Welcome to the Godwits" Birds Nelson installed an informative display in the Motueka public library. I think David and Alison were responsible for this, but if I've missed others my apologies. *Photos courtesy David Melville*



As part of the Motueka 'Step Out Walking Festival' on Sat 5th October, Birds Nelson also organised a public walk along the sandspit to view waders. 25 members of the public were guided by 10 Birds Nelson members plus scopes. It was a beautiful day and 1680 godwits, 300 red knots, together with banded dotterel, and ruddy turnstone were seen by these fortunate people. Thanks go to Sharen Graham for organising this event and to all members who turned out to support. *(photo Kathryn Richards)*

WOOD DUCK UPDATE Australian Wood Duck Project update as of 14 October 2024 (Sharen Graham)

Up to 20 Australian wood ducks (AWD) are currently in a loose flock on private property in Mapua and more birds in the wider area. A small number have bred in the past, possibly in a combination of artificial nest boxes and natural sites. Most recently there is a female with 1 duckling and with presumably the remainder of the clutch predated.

Our AWD team has 8 artificial nest boxes in 3 other locations in an attempt to entice these birds to successfully breed. Eggs have been laid in 3 of these boxes.

In publicly accessible areas to deter interference, boxes are generally around 5 m above ground level. Checking box contents using an endoscope attached to an extended window washing pole is easy. Currently the status of the 3 active boxes is:

Box 1: On 14/10, 8 AWD eggs and 2 paradise duck eggs all cold and infertile when candled. All eggs removed to encourage re-laying and new wood shavings added. Next action: periodically endoscope to check whether the box is reused.

Box "bike": 6 AWD eggs and 3 paradise duck eggs. On 14/10 a female flew from the box as we approached, and we quickly retreated to avoid further disturbance. Next action: around 26 October if local observers are not seeing ducklings, remove and candle eggs and if not warm and fertile, remove entirely, renew shavings.

Australian studies cite incubation as likely to be between 28-33 days.

Box 4: 10 AWD eggs, 1 paradise duck egg, 1 little owl egg, all cold. On 22 Sept, eggs were floated to gauge their age, the paradise and little owl eggs removed, and AWD eggs placed back into the nest. On 14/10 no endoscopy or egg handling as a female is regularly observed entering and leaving the box. From a distance it is not possible to judge whether there is a bird inside. Next action: the same as for Box "bike" above. We don't know whether more AWD eggs were added to the 10 and whether incubation then began.



Photo showing 10 AWD eggs, 1 paradise shelduck egg top right, 1 little owl egg bottom right with eggs ready to return to the nest box. This box had an unsuccessful nesting attempt last season

Paradise duck females have regularly been observed entering boxes and are still in the vicinity. The end result of having any fertile paradise duck and AWD eggs together is unknown.

We believe that more than one little owl is in the vicinity. We don't know until box contents are next inspected whether any more little owl eggs have been added to the AWD clutches. It is possible that they are now inhabiting a tree hole close to the AWD nest box, but which is too high to endoscope. Nest boxes specifically for little owl are proposed.

We are minimising disturbance. Incubating females are very nervous and often fly from a box at the sound of voices nearby. Vigilant males on a pond or grass close to a box regularly fly even if a stationary observer is 40 m distant.

An intensive network of traps is closely ringing the wider nest box vicinities. Pukeko are numerous however and will certainly predate ducklings. Small nearby man-made ponds on which ducklings would seek refuge have minimal edge cover and are regularly patrolled by harriers. "Dogs under control" rules apply near these ponds and associated grass areas where AWD regularly graze. This does frequently cause disturbance. (*Sharen Graham and the rest of the team*)

CAN ANYONE TOP THIS? First shining cuckoo? (+ banded godwit report) Ingrid Hutzler

Ingrid writes 'Not sure if anyone else has reported the first spring sightings of shining cuckoos in the Nelson/Tasman area yet, but in case this is of interest - we heard one on 18 September on Rabbit Island and 24 September in Stoke (entered in eBird).

Ciao, Ingrid'

Ingrid also reports 'Thought you may be interested in our recent Australian flag and band sightings on 10 September at Stockton Sand Spit (near Newcastle) Central Coast: Bar-tailed godwit YYYY with white flag in 4 position, amongst a group of 80 birds, one of which had O/G flags. Red knot with O/G flags with aerial among 6 other red knots and 115 bar-tailed godwits on 9 September, same location as above.

We submitted both sightings online at <https://www.birdmark.net/>. Have more photos, but they are all a bit blurry due to long distance.

And the reply from Jesse Corklin 'Wow - Yes, she is eagerly expected! Going by the database, that is the first non-Manawatu resight of her since Yalu Jiang in 2006!



DECEMBER MEETING --And just like that it's Christmas

As per last year the December meeting will have a primarily social focus. Once again David and Vicky Melville have generously offered their beautiful Dovedale property for our meeting. Provisional meeting date is Monday 2nd Dec (subject to confirmation/change). Although this is still a while away you may wish to put your thoughts to a gastronomic contribution other than a lettuce salad.

ERROR CORRECTION

Apparently, I confused some photos in the last edition. Jane Meiforth explains. 'The photo of spoonbills to the right was taken by Rob Jones at the turn off at Anatori to Kaihoka Lakes (42 spoonbills in total). Christine Grove took different photos at the Motueka roost sites.' Hope that puts it right and sorry for the error.

AND FINALLY –

A couple of great shots from Christine Grove of the Pacific reef heron taken on October 7th at Porters Beach spit.



Cheers, Paul Bennett 021454520 thebraveryofbeingoutofrange@gmail.com

