

# THE WRYBILL

Canterbury Regional Newsletter

## NOVEMBER 2024

### Field Trips:

November 9 - November Beach patrol at Kaitorete. We'll walk a section of the beach west from the Birdlings Flat counting and identifying dead seabirds. Contact Anita if you'd like to come along. [birds.canterbury@birds.nz.org.nz](mailto:birds.canterbury@birds.nz.org.nz)

November 16 - Ashley-Rakahuri braided river bird survey from 9-1pm. Please contact the secretary to register your interest. [sectretaryarrg@gmail.com](mailto:sectretaryarrg@gmail.com)

November 16 - The Matuku Muster is on, a coordinated count across the country for booming bittern. For more information and to register your interest visit [www.lovebittern.com](http://www.lovebittern.com)

November 24 - Wader Survey. Nick Allen is organising the Te Waihora part and needs a good number of volunteers to complete our sections. Please contact him directly at [nick\\_allen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nick_allen@xtra.co.nz)

December 14 - a day to the Hawden Valley to look for forest birds. Contact Anita if interested

January 19 - A visit to Greenpark Sands, Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere to look at the waders. Contact Anita if interested. (Contact Anita if you would like to host a future trip)

### Indoor Meetings:

Evening Meetings will take place at 7:30 pm on the last Monday of the month at Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Plenty of parking available.

November 4 - Sara Kross talking about "Farm friends and farm foes: Understanding the net effects of birds for agriculture and how to create more bird-friendly farms.

December 2 - Members night and Christmas Party! This won't be an online meeting. Bring some kai to share, photos, videos, a quiz, bones, nests, etc

We are then taking a break with the first meeting of 2025 being on the 24th of February.

If you are willing or know someone who would be willing to present at a meeting please let Anita know at [birds.canterbury@birds.nz.org.nz](mailto:birds.canterbury@birds.nz.org.nz)



Banded Dotterel - Ashley-Rakahuri Estuary - Samuel Amaris

## RR's Report

Kia ora koutou from the RR's burrow.

We held an event at the Ashley Estuary mid-October with the Ashley Rakahuri Rivercare Group. The aim was to introduce people visiting the estuary to the amazing bird life there and to advocate for bird friendly behaviour such as keeping dogs out of the estuary (as they are legally meant to) and keeping away from roosting and nesting birds.

The turnout was a bit low, although some people had come specifically for this event which was encouraging. The people that did come and look at the birds with us seemed very appreciative of the chance to learn more about what birds lived there, and to see them up close. Thanks to all of our members that came along and shared their knowledge with the public.

We've had good attendance at our monthly meetings, including those online, and I'm sure the excellent speakers we've had are a key factor. Bruce Postill spoke to us about his visits

to North Korea to survey the shorebirds there for the first time. It was a fascinating glimpse at the behind-the-scenes process involved in getting access to it. The huge flocks of birds were phenomenal. It inspired a few of us to hunt out the TVNZ documentary about the survey which has some great footage. We had Peter Reese speaking in August about his harrier banding project, and some of the band recoveries including the harrier banded in Cashmere found dead near Hastings 38 days later. A journey of 541km in a straight line. Allanah Purdie and Harry Caley from DOC talked about the state of NZ's bittern and the work being undertaken to try to stop the decline. The thermal imaging using drones to find bitterns in wetlands looks promising for finding nests in such hard-to-reach terrain.

We've got our November wading bird count coming up on the 24th. I'll be away so please contact Nick Allen directly if you would like to take part.

Anita Spencer

## News Bulletin

### South Auckland Newsletter

The latest edition of the Birds New Zealand South Auckland region newsletter is now online, read it at:

[www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/](http://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/)

### BBO - Warden Vacancies

BBO are looking for wardens for 2025 onwards. This may be an exciting and rewarding opportunity to live and work at one of the best shorebird sites in the world!

Read details at

[nrmjobs.com.au/jobs/2024/20023383/wardens?back=1](http://nrmjobs.com.au/jobs/2024/20023383/wardens?back=1)

### Nelson Newsletter

The latest edition of the Birds New Zealand Nelson region newsletter is now online

[www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/nelson-newsletter/](http://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/nelson-newsletter/)

### 2025 Wildlife Calendar

Josh Overend has produced a 2025 wildlife calendar. \$1 from each calendar goes to support the South Island Wildlife Hospital.

[www.joshoverendphotography.com/store/p/2025-calendar](http://www.joshoverendphotography.com/store/p/2025-calendar)

# Rambles with Janet Burton

Rambles are “unofficial” birding field trips usually hosted by Bev Alexander, however because Bev is busy at the moment, Janet Burton will be hosting the upcoming ones. All are welcome to participate and most rambles are at accessible locations.

## Upcoming Rambles:

November 5 - Cooper's Lagoon, meet at 9:30am nearby the Challenge station along the main road of Leeston.

November 19 - Kitesurf beach on Humphries road, then onto the Ferrymead area near Charleston Reserve and if time allows a visit to McCormacks Bay. Tide dependent venue, meeting time will be advised closer to the date.

January 23 - Victoria Park and further up to Sign of the Kiwi & Bellbird if time allows. Meet at Victoria Park carpark 9:45am.

February 25 - Leithfield beach returning via Waikuku Beach / Ashley Estuary and a visit to Pegasus if time allows.

You **must** let Janet know if you plan to attend any of these rambles. This is to make sure that Janet can contact you in case times or locations change, or if you are unavailable to make the ramble.

Remember your Health & safety awareness while walking, notify Janet if you are feeling unwell or if you have any concerns. Please wear suitable footwear, jackets for incase of a change in weather, a hat and sunscreen. Bring lunch and water as well.

Email: [huish2006@hotmail.com](mailto:huish2006@hotmail.com) Phone: 022 0388 668

## October Ramble Review - Greenpark Huts & Haswell Canal:

The day turned out sunny and warm for us five who met in Lincoln at 9.30am eager to find the Bittern. We first stopped briefly at the Lincoln wetlands hoping to glimpse a Spotless Crake however, it was not to be.

Driving onto Greenpark Huts, we stopped at the entrance of the track to discuss what birds may be about and to listen for the bittern 'boom' call. It was here we saw a Red-legged Partridge poking around in the undergrowth of bushes, this was a nice surprise and a first for most of us. We also saw two White-faced herons, one of which was collecting nesting material for its nest near the huts. There were also lots of Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Yellowhammers, Harriers and Skylarks as we drove along the track.

Parking at the end of track we recorded our bird sightings as we ate morning tea. Then ventured up the right hand track towards Lake Ellesmere and passed a smaller open water area where we saw water birds. Unfortunately we were not lucky enough to see or hear any Bittern this time.

Keen to visit another spot we drove over to Yarrs Flat, hoping to see some Kingfisher. We



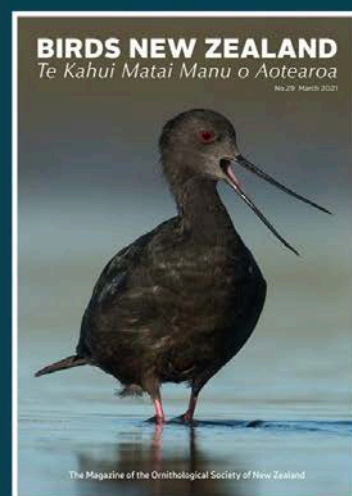
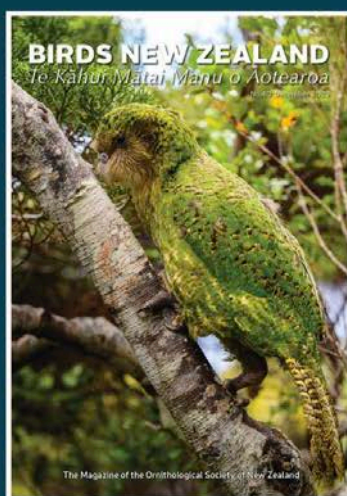
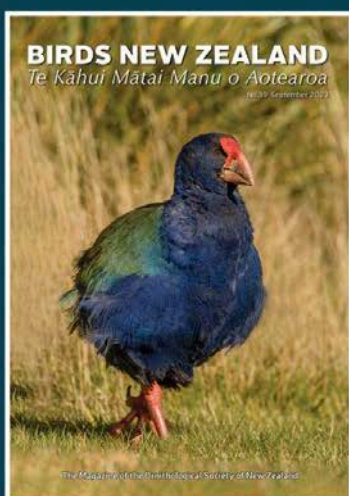
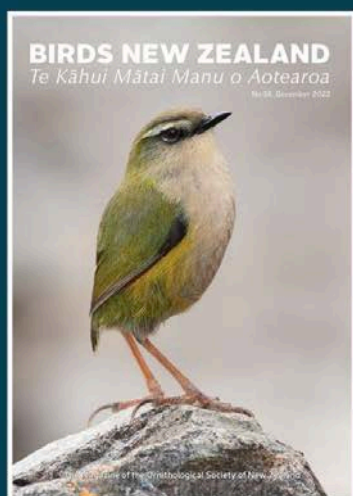
pulled over near the boat ramp and just as we had just clambered out of our cars we were attacked by some angry wasps! Unfortunately Patrick was badly stung, and we quickly left for the car park.

We then attempted to scan for some waders on the lake shore only to find the ground too wet and boggy to get any closer. The lake level was high any prospect of waders there was low anyway. We had lunch at Yarrs again, did some birding and then returned to Lincoln by 2pm.

It was a nice morning ramble, with three members of the group introduced to a new birding ground for them. Which is really what rambles are all about, trying to find interesting new places to explore for birds. Thanks to all the members who turned up, it was good to get your positive feedback.

I feel it is worth visiting Greenpark again for Bittern, best in the early morning or later in the day. The New Zealand Pipit can be found there too.

*Janet Burton*



You can join Birds New Zealand right now for just \$1.75 a week.  
It costs \$90 a year, and for students it's just \$45 a year:  
<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/donate/>

**JOIN US NOW OR DONATE**



# Birds New Zealand Youth Camp

[www.birdsnz.org.nz](http://www.birdsnz.org.nz)

December 15<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>

Introduction to birding and good birds

- Observation, identification and recording
- Catching and banding
- Simple monitoring

Pukorokoro Shorebird Centre

Ages 13-18

Cost \$400.00

Find out more: [iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz)



## Birdlings Flat Beach Patrol 17 August 2024

I advertised a beach patrol at Kaitorete to try to kick start branch beach patrols again. Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned that it could be a '7km slog' because I had the grand total of one member put their hand up to come along. Erick Akeley had joined up to Birds NZ only two weeks before, but if he was game for the trip then I was. I knew the day was going to be something special when I pulled up to the meeting point at the Birdlings Flat turnoff to find Erick drives a 1957 Morris Minor, one of five he owns of the same vintage. My first car was a 1954 Morris Minor Traveller which I had for 5 years and have regretted selling for the rest of my life. I enjoyed every second of shuttling the vehicles to our end and start point.

As we set out along the beach the weather was magnificent, Kaitorete at its absolute finest. Not too hot, not too cold, blue skies and not a breath of wind. In a previous life I used to regularly work out here but have avoided the place after the central farm changed hands and the unique dryland ecosystem was destroyed to become a green pivot irrigator eyesore. The beach was relatively firm to walk on and even on a calm day big waves rolled up and crashed onto the steep shore. We could hear numerous skylarks singing above the dunes, and along the sea shore frequent southern black backed gulls and red-billed gulls cruised past.

After half an hour I ran into the dunes for a wee, and as I walked back past an old fenced lizard enclosure I noticed a large bird sitting on one of the fence posts. I raised my binoculars and was astounded to see a Kārearea / New Zealand falcon calmly sitting there watching me. I ran to get Erick and we stood there watching it for a good 5 minutes before turning to keep walking. For the next half an hour the falcon flew parallel to us along the beach, stopping to perch on posts and driftwood piles. Wow. After a bit longer a few black backed gulls came past in a group just offshore but the lead bird was larger and whiter and it was a Australasian gannet / Tākapu. Erick got his binoculars on it in time to see it do a spectacular dive into the sea.

The rest of the patrol was still eventful. We could hear banded dotterel / Pohowera occasionally along the top of the beach but never saw them. We did walk past three different pairs of South Island pied oystercatchers spaced wide apart along the spit. Each pair was relatively quiet and



acting a bit cagey. Will they nest amongst the driftwood? Finally as our exit point neared we actually saw what we had come for, a dead bird. An immature pied shag lay above the tide line. We gave it a freshness score of 'A'. It still had a seabird smell to it and wasn't dried up, but was starting to decay. 9.2km of walking later we reached the car at 1pm. It had been a wonderful day and reminded me again why Kaitorete is still my favourite place in the world.

Anita Spencer



## A Long Journey For a Little Bird

On 30 June 2022, we banded a total of 84 new Silvereyes, including AP-27099, at a regular banding site on a large property on Cashmere Rd. near Halswell, in Christchurch. On 28 July 22 we banded a further 41 Silvereyes and recaptured 3 of the 84 birds banded on the 30th June, including AP-27099.

On 27 August 2024, a Silvereye with band number AP-27099 was caught and severely injured by a cat in Milton Rd, Mt Eden, Auckland. It was taken into care at Bird Care Aotearoa but later died. The band number was checked by at least 2 people while it was under care, but unfortunately the band itself was not kept. This is a long journey for such a little bird, including presumably a crossing of the Cook Strait. There have been several reported distance recoveries of banded silvereyes in New Zealand, including Kaikoura to Wellington, Rangiora to Greymouth and Rangiora to Otira. But this is possibly one of the longest, if not the longest recorded.

In Australia, where our Silvereyes originate from, long journeys are relatively common, with birds from Tasmania migrating to the mainland annually. It is this Tasmanian population that colonised New Zealand, first recorded in the 1830's. Whether they flew all the way or perhaps hitched a ride in the rigging of a sailing ship, we will never know for sure.

During the years I was banding in Wellington, two birds were caught that must have crossed the Cook Strait. One had been banded at Ward and the other in Kaikoura. On clear autumn and winter nights, flocks of silvereye have been heard in the south, flying high in a northerly direction. When doing night shifts a number of years ago, this was a regular occurrence.


Peter Reese



*Banding Silvereyes at Styx Mill - Josh Overend*



*Tauhou, Silvereye - Alfie Benbow*

A photograph of a Laughing Kookaburra perched on a thick, textured tree branch. The bird has a white head with a brown patch around its eye, a long, dark, hooked beak, and brown and white mottled plumage on its wings and back. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a dense forest or bush.

*Laughing Kookaburra - Samuel Amaris*

## A Road Trip Across Australia

In the winter of 2024, Russell and I crossed Australia on “Australia’s Longest Shortcut” – The Outback Way, a distance of 4700 km from Perth to Cairns across the continent. It was not designed as a birding trip, but we noted any significant sightings of not only birds but any other wildlife encountered. I took the opportunity to record some eBird listings at various times.

We had a week at Magnetic Island (out from Townsville) first, where the most interesting birds are the Bush Stone Curlews that wander around everywhere anytime and are unconcerned by humans. They are quite active at night also and often have very loud “committee” meetings all night. Occasionally I have seen a pair of Burdekin ducks on the lagoon; many other tropical species can be found too, with Rainbow Bee eaters and Peaceful Doves common. In particular parts of the island, koalas can be easily found, and there is an area where thousands of butterflies winter over.

On the drive to Cairns for a connecting flight to Darwin, we stopped at a lovely wetland in Ingham and walked to a beautiful water lily-filled lagoon inhabited by Jacanas and many other waterfowl; we had to watch out for crocodiles even though we were some distance from the coast.

In Darwin (we were there for a convention), the sunsets are beautiful and were the first of an almost nightly show of magnificently coloured skies. While here, we visited two significant places for birds. We had learnt that at Lee Point, Gouldian finches were “everywhere,” but on a 35-degree day they were nowhere to be seen—all the birds were elsewhere, keeping cool. We did see Orange-footed scrubfowls (a northern endemic) on the lawns in Darwin parks. Fogg Dam is a huge wetland that was once set up to grow rice, but due to a number of factors, that failed, so there is this massive area of wetland with thousands of birds; the most dominant species are Magpie Geese, White Herons, and Pied Herons. The wetland supports an estimated 8 tonnes of Dusky rats (about 100,000 per square km), the highest mammalian biomass in the world. These are prey for 2,500 Water pythons at about 800 per square km (the highest biomass for a vertebrate predator in the world). We encountered many huge Golden Orb spiders, which often had their webs across the tracks (at head height)! A truly amazing place with its own population of crocodiles. The high temperatures and humidity every day made birding a challenge.

After Darwin, we flew to Perth to connect with our caravan and truck to start our trek across the country. It is about 1000 km before the actual “Outback Way” begins, and on this part of the journey we crossed the historical Rabbit Proof Fence, and our notable birds were a few Wedge-tailed Eagles on road kills and small numbers of Emus alongside the road. In the interior of Australia, the only sign of habitation is the road; there are no fences, gates, powerlines, or pylons out here. Outback roads are generally in good drivable condition with lots of red dust that gets into everything, and apart from big flocks of Galahs and Corellas and the ever-present circling kites, there were surprisingly few birds seen as we moved along. Other feral animals seen were a group of donkeys, wild horses, a dingo, a hare, a fox, a cat, and large mobs of camels. Along most roads there are also crows. They are very smart birds and have learnt that vehicles are a danger, so wander casually off the bitumen to the edges until they pass; we never saw a crow dead on the road. Sometimes they hop away sideways, which reminded me of kea antics.



We left WA and entered the Northern Territory, still on red roads. Contrary to many people's expectations, these areas are not devoid of vegetation; much of it is savannah-like, with varying heights of scattered bushes and trees. Near Uluru and the Olgas there is a very unusual tree, restricted to this area, the Desert Oak (it is not actually an oak), which has 2 different forms as it ages, and the leaves, which are needle-like, all point down to the ground to direct moisture to the roots.

At King's, Canyon Spinifex pigeons were present in pairs. In Alice Springs, "Desert Park" has a wonderful display of all the different desert habitats, showcasing the flora and birds in large aviaries in each habitat, and a free flight show with owls, kites, and parrots. It is a fabulous place worthy of many hours to take it all in.

Still travelling east on the Plenty Highway, we saw many large flocks of budgies swirling their beautiful green and yellow in the sunlight, Zebra Finches, Corellas, several circling Wedgetails, and a Bustard. We crossed into Queensland and continued to see Emus, Camels, and Kites as we changed direction and started north to Karumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria; this is termite country with fields of mounds looking like a graveyard. There is a greater biomass of termites underground than kangaroos and cattle above ground! Every day we saw carnage on the roads; many wallabies met their demise overnight, probably as a result of road trains that travel 24/7 delivering goods up here. The most common bird here is the Brolga; they are everywhere around the town, feeding on the roadside land and even in the caravan parks. We had hoped to see a Saurus crane too; that was not to be, but we did spot one Jabiru in a small wetland. Other visible species were Ibis and Herons, Grey Teal and Black Ducks, and on the beach were roosting Australian Terns, Silver Gulls, and Pied Stilts when the tide was high. There is only 1 tide a day up here, a 12-hour turnaround, and of course, crocodile warnings everywhere.

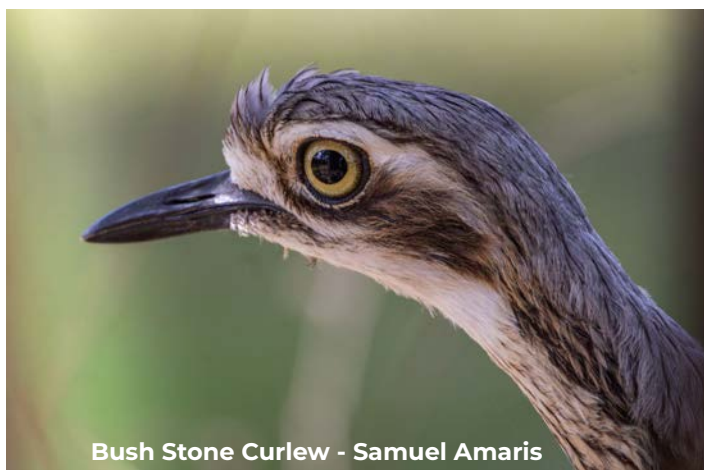
Then we turned south, where we saw an endangered Dunnart (a small marsupial the size of a large mouse) in a captive breeding program at Julia Creek, through Winton (and Dinosaurs), and Longreach, where Brolgas roam and the streets all have bird names. Longreach had the biggest bird of all—a real Boeing 747 at the Qantas museum! On and on to Lara Station, where one can free camp by a beautiful billabong with waders, ducks, and bush birds and free music entertainment. On this journey, every town we stopped at had flocks of Galahs decorating the power lines and hundreds of Corellas that flew into large trees at dusk to roost. Most of the caravan parks had resident Crested Pigeons running around, and many places had groups of Apostle birds present. On one occasion, a 1.5-meter Goana ran across the road in front of us, and smaller lizards were quite common on tracks.

Still going south, more Emus, endangered Bilbies (a marsupial the size of a rabbit with really long upright ears) at Charleville, and on to Cunnamulla, where we spent a day at "Bowra." This reserve was disappointing as, due to earlier rain, the tracks were closed to vehicles, meaning some of the special species living there were not reachable. Then, feral goats and more goats all along both sides of the road, to Bourke, where the Darling River actually had water in it, to Cobar, a huge copper mining town, and to Warren, where cotton is grown, and then to Dubbo, home of the Taronga Western Plains Zoo. We spent a day there learning about many African animal breeding programs and seeing the usual Aussie endemics. The zoo has a successful captive breeding program for the highly endangered Regent Honeyeater, a new bird for me (not wild though).

From here we went east again until we met the Tasman Sea at Newcastle, where we saw gulls, terns, cormorants, and a darter. We had crossed from West to East, traversing four states, then, leaving our caravan inland at Armidale until next year, we flew home from Sydney.

*Jill West*

Any comments or questions are welcome to [jillwest86@gmail.com](mailto:jillwest86@gmail.com)



**Bush Stone Curlew - Samuel Amaris**



**Torresian Crow - Alfie Benbow**





## Styx Living Laboratory Trust Banding Training

Recently, the Styx Living Laboratory Trust has hosted numerous bird-banding training sessions. The goal of these sessions is to provide an opportunity for less experienced banders to increase their knowledge base and bird handling, along with practising their banding skills on several smaller native and exotic birds.

During the week leading up to a banding session, members from the Styx Living Laboratory Trust team pre-fed multiple sites with wheat seed and fat balls. This aimed to draw in small passerines to specific locations to improve our chances of a successful session. On the days of the session, numerous mist nets were set up covering our feeding sites to try and maximise the number of birds and upskilling we could get out of these sessions.

To date, three banding practice days have been held, all yielding great success. Overall, we have banded almost 100 birds across seven species, including silvereye, greenfinch, house sparrow, dunnocks, chaffinch, song thrush, and blackbird. We have also been fortunate enough to borrow a Kāhu trap that was used in the previous banding session. This was pre-baited but left unset the week prior to the session to habituate our local raptors to the trap. A dead possum from the Styx Living Laboratory Trust's trapline was used along with a pūkeko that had succumbed to roadkill. Unfortunately, on the day of the sessions when the trap was set, no harriers were interested in the cage, but we have our fingers crossed for success next time.

Bird experts Peter Reese and Phil Crutchley played an essential role in running these sessions. Their expertise and tutoring have allowed many banders to upskill and learn many new skills, like removing birds from mist nets, accurately ageing and measuring small birds, and how to apply bands safely. These sessions have been so successful that numerous banders may be moved up to level two sometime in the near future. The plan is to continue running these sessions to further teach and improve local bird banders.

*Josh Overend*

# The Peter Schweigman Memorial Royal Spoonbill Colony and Nest Count 2024

## Introduction and description of project

The Birds New Zealand Regions carried out a successful nation-wide count of colonies and nests of royal spoonbill in the 2013/2014 season to provide a baseline from which to compare any changes in breeding. The number of colonies in 2013 was twenty. It is expected that with the increase in sightings in the intervening years of royal spoonbill all over NZ there will now be more new colonies. Another systematic, coordinated survey to locate colonies and count active nests is planned for the 2024/2025 breeding season. Each Birds NZ Region will oversee and coordinate the survey for their region. This will provide the information needed to find out whether royal spoonbills are continuing to extend their breeding range and increase nest numbers.

## Objectives

- Locate royal spoonbill breeding colonies.
- Count the number of adult birds in attendance at the colony.
- Count number of active nests during the breeding season, 2024/2025.
- Provide new data to compare with baseline data obtained in 2013/2014 to determine whether royal spoonbills have extended their breeding range, and whether the size of colonies has increased or declined.

## Methods

*Keep disturbance to a minimum.*

### Locating Breeding Colonies:

- Locate breeding colonies by systematic survey of possible sites. Aerial surveys may be needed to locate remote colonies. They are often in hard to access areas remote from humans. They are usually surrounded by or above water and may be associated with black-backed gull colonies or shag colonies. They may be on islands, small islets, rock stacks off the coast, islands within river estuaries, or deep within wetland areas.
- The site of the nest ranges from on the ground to many metres high in trees. The type of nest ranges from simply flattened grasses without much nest material to large loose constructions of interwoven sticks and twigs.

### Survey of Colony Location

- Determine geo-coordinates of colony locations, either by reference to Google Earth or topographic maps. Describe location of nests: type of tree/shrub nests located in; height above water, accessibility, etc. Estimate percent of colony you can observe. Note anything that may affect accuracy of counts, e.g. distance from vantage point to colony, clear view of colony obscured by a tree, recent disturbance by members of the public.
- Take photographs from as many angles as possible to show nest locations and birds present.

### Number of birds and nests

- Count the number of adult birds in attendance at the colony during your survey.
- Count active nests at least once between mid November 2024 and 31 January 2025; identify and count active nests: nests with an adult present apparently incubating eggs or brooding small chicks, or presence of nestlings on nests. Identify and count other intact unoccupied nests; probably used in the recent past, or yet to be used.
- If counts are made from a vantage point overlooking the colony, please provide a map (or GPS coordinates) showing locations of vantage point and colony.
- If counts are obtained from images obtained from flyovers by light plane or drone, please indicate methodology of count.

### Always keep disturbance to a minimum

- Always keep disturbance to a minimum; adults may fly off nests or may desert nests; juvenile birds may jump off nests into water and drown. (Please report any disturbance in the comments section.)
- If possible do not enter colonies.
- If possible, counts should be made from a vantage point overlooking the colony; please provide a map (or GPS coordinates) showing locations of vantage point and colony.
- If the colony is located on an island and water transport is required to gain access to the colony, attempt to count and photograph colony from the boat first before landing, and if landing on the island is necessary, then when on the island make a quick approach to the colony (hopefully from a high point above nests) to count active nests. Retreat as quickly as possible to keep disturbance to a minimum.



- Where colonies are on cliffs, the best way is to move to a vantage point above the colony and use binoculars and/or a telescope for the counting.
- If a light plane or drone flyover is used to obtain images of the colony, follow all aviation guidelines and plan for minimal disturbance of birds.

#### Use of Drones to obtain aerial images.

- All the logistics for using drones to obtain aerial images is entirely up to the Region undertaking the survey.
- Each Birds NZ Region will be responsible for obtaining any permissions or permits that are required for flying drones over private land or areas administered by Department of Conservation. The guidelines for use of drones will be adhered to.  
<https://www.aviation.govt.nz/drones/part-101-rules-for-drones/> Aviation Security Services.  
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/apply-for-permits/recreational-drone-use/> Department of Conservation.
- Drone-induced disturbance can be problematic for bird surveys. It is advised that drones should be launched and brought to altitude at least 100m away from the colony, and flown above 50m, but below 120m (aviation rules), and aborted if disturbance occurs.

#### Health & Safety:

Birds New Zealand Health and Safety Plan will be adhered to.

#### Data Recording:

Print copies of field log for each participant.

Please transfer data from field logs to spreadsheet and return to Mary Thompson  
[nzmaryt@gmail.com](mailto:nzmaryt@gmail.com) by 1 March 2025.

**Ebird:** please submit an eBird checklist via the eBird NZ portal for each location with number of birds and breeding status. This will help with continuing to update the Status and Trends outputs for this species post census.

#### PLEASE RETURN SURVEY RESULTS (via Regional Representative) BY 1 March 2025 TO:

Mary Thompson, Survey Coordinator

Email: [nzmaryt@gmail.com](mailto:nzmaryt@gmail.com)



*Ambury Regional Park - Lucy Dean*  
*Ashley-Rakahuri Estuary - Samuel Amaris*



*Ambury Regional Park - Andy Xiong*  
*Waimanu Lagoon - Alfie Benbow*



# Bird Sightings

## BirdsNZ Report for Canterbury September 2024 - October 2024

As winter gives way to spring, we eagerly look forward to a hopefully exciting wader season. September and October have brought several notable sightings, increased activity, and dedicated efforts within the birding community.

The Ashley Estuary continues to host the resident pair of Little Egrets, who now display breeding plumages, sparking hope for possible breeding activity (would be a first in New Zealand if so!). Additional excitement at Ashley came with the arrival of a Terek Sandpiper on 27 October and several Red Knots earlier in the month.

Lake Ellesmere/Te Waihora has started welcoming back migratory waders for the season. Recent sightings include a variety of species: Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, a Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stints, Wrybills, Pacific Golden Plovers and the local Australian Tern.

Banded Dotterels have started nesting in multiple locations, with a particularly encouraging sight at the Ashley-Rakahuri Estuary Spit, where a pair has nested for the first time in years. Additionally, several pairs have been observed nesting at Christchurch Airport.

A few unusual records added excitement to recent outings. In late September, a Subantarctic Skua was spotted off Kaikoura, followed by an Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross during a pelagic trip on the 12 of October. A Red-legged Partridge was also seen on one of Bev Alexander's rambles near Greenpark Huts—a lifer for many of the attendees.

In mid-October, BirdsNZ joined forces with the Ashley Rakahuri Rivercare Group to host an event at the Ashley Estuary. The event aimed to introduce visitors to the incredible bird life at the estuary while advocating for bird-friendly behavior, including keeping dogs out of the estuary and minimizing disturbances around roosting and nesting birds.

In additional conservation news, the Matuku (Australasian Bittern) Muster has commenced, with some of our members contributing their time and observations to help locate and monitor this elusive species.

As spring progresses, we look forward to a fruitful wader season, with more visitors expected at Ellesmere and throughout Canterbury. A reminder to all members: if you have sightings, articles, or interest in giving a talk, please get in touch with myself or Anita Spencer—we appreciate your contributions to the BirdsNZ Canterbury community!

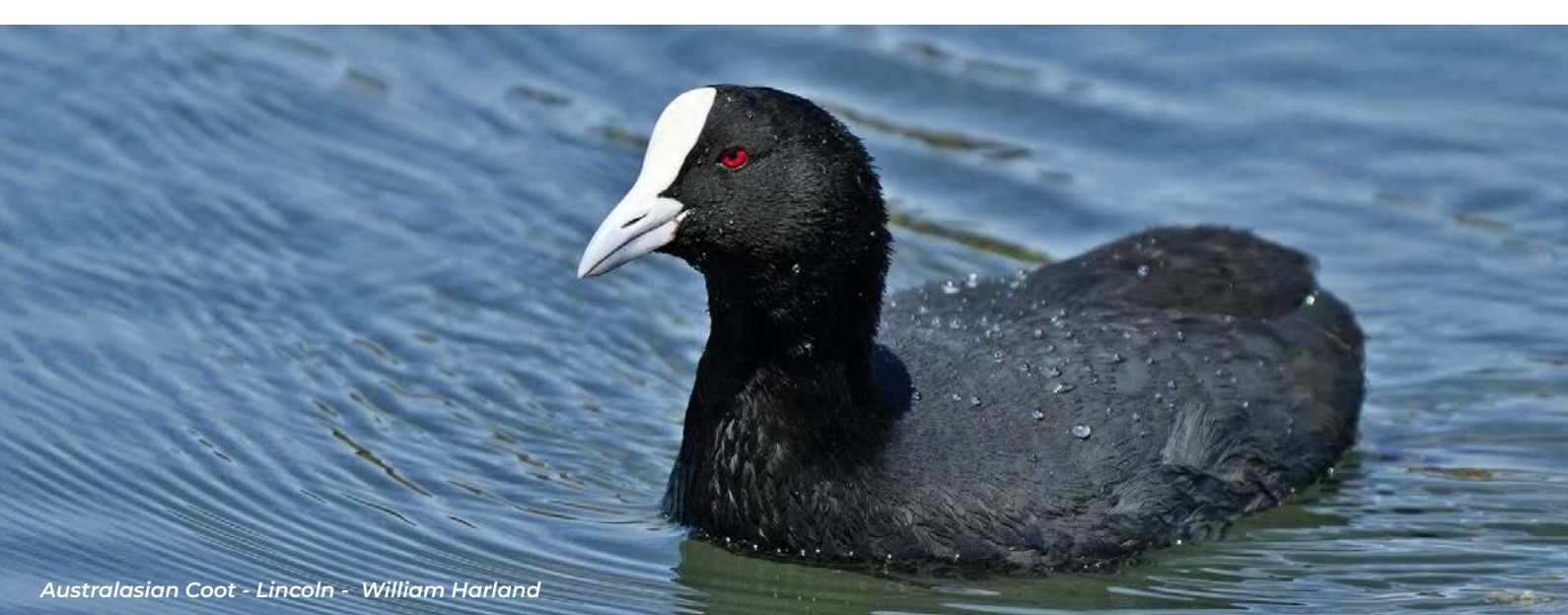
*Terek Sandpiper - Samuel Amaris*



*Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - Ben Ackerley*







Australasian Coot - Lincoln - William Harland

## Health and Safety

For everyone to have an enjoyable time on field trips and other activities we need to make sure everyone stays safe. Here's how you can do your bit.

1. Wear clothing appropriate for the activity such as plenty of warm layers, hat and gloves in winter; a sunhat and sunglasses in summer. Bringing a raincoat is always a sensible option. Footwear needs to be suitable as well - think sturdy soles and good ankle support for many walks, especially on hills, something that can get wet and muddy especially at Lake Ellesmere in winter. Walking poles could be helpful to some on steep and/or uneven ground.
2. Be honest and open about your physical abilities. Not all trips will be suitable for everyone. If you have a pre-existing medical condition that could impact the trip (such as - but not limited to - asthma, allergy to bee stings, diabetes) please notify the trip leader of the condition, any problems that could arise and what the trip leader and others may be required to do to assist you. This information will be kept confidential unless a medical event requires it being shared. Make sure you bring whatever medications you may need.
3. Bring enough food and drink for the event plus a little extra in case the trip takes longer than planned. Fresh water is not always available and dehydration can be a concern in summer so bring your own drinking water.
4. Listen to the health and safety briefing given at the beginning of each trip, keep your eye out for any unexpected hazards and talk to the trip leader and others if you have any concerns along the way. Let the trip leader know of any accidents or near misses.
5. Stay with the group at all times unless you have the trip leader's okay.
6. The trip leader reserves the right to decline participation in any trip if they have concerns about anyone being unable to participate safely or not being suitably equipped.
7. Health and safety incidents or concerns must be reported to the trip leader/RR immediately.

## Scopes for Loan:

If you are in Canterbury and wish to borrow a scope contact Sandra ([sandraw67@gmail.com](mailto:sandraw67@gmail.com)). If you are on the West Coast and wish to borrow a scope, contact Liz Meek ([ronmeek555@gmail.com](mailto:ronmeek555@gmail.com)).

## Submissions:

The editor invites members to submit articles and/or photos for the next issue of *The Wrybill*. Please email any contributions through to [samuel.amaris.home@gmail.com](mailto:samuel.amaris.home@gmail.com). Many thanks to everybody who contributed to this edition of *The Wrybill*.

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