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Otago Region Newsletter 2/2025

February 2025



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

Ornithological Snippets

A **Shining Cuckoo/Pipīwharau** chick with **Grey Warbler/Riroriro** foster parent was seen at Swampy Summit on 16 February. There have been more sightings of **Weka** around Dunedin, this time in NE Valley in late January.

2 **South Island Pied Oystercatcher/Tōrea** were reported in Queenstown on 10 February, and 3 in the Remarkables on 15 & 16. A **Common Diving-Petrel/Kuaka** flying across Lake Wanaka on 1 February was unexpected

A late report is of a **Laughing Kookaburra** at Glenore, near Milton, on 1 December. A **Kaka/Kākā** was at Lake Hayes Estate on 11/12 February, and a **Red-crowned Parakeet/Kākāriki** was heard at Otanomomo, near Balclutha, on 15 February. **Eastern Rosella/Kākā uhi whero** was recorded from Palmerston on 8 February, and also in the Puerua Valley early in the month.

Tomtit/Miromiro was seen at both Otanomomo and Awakiki Bush on 15 February, with no previous records of the species at either location.

Finally there have been 2 translocations in the region recently. 18 **South Island Takahe/Takahē** were released in the Rees Valley on 11 February, including an Orokonui-raised bird, and 51 **South Island Saddleback/Tīeke** were liberated at Orokonui on 25 January.



Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

Māori Bird Names in eBird

For anyone who is interested, Māori bird names are available as an option when entering data in the app (on Android, at least). The common English name is shown alongside. Just go to Settings > Common Name Language, and scroll down to Māori.

Richard 027 281 8701 or cluthaphotos@gmail.com

BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

Health & Safety



BirdsNZ Council have asked for Regional newsletters to include a standing request to report on Health & Safety issues.

A reminder to members that when involved with organised BirdsNZ Field Trips and activities, that we should not hesitate to call 111 to respond to medical events or incidents that result in harm.

If anyone has been involved in or is aware of an incident that resulted in harm to any of our activity participants, please contact the Regional Representative, so that the President and EO can be notified immediately

Plan ahead, stay safe while birding everyone.

Dawn: birds.otago@birdsNZ.org.nz 027 442 7348

February 2025

Our February meeting will be an 'Ornithological Potpourri' - member's summer birding highlights! Please send Oscar a selection of photos or slides (up to 5 or 10 minutes) to include in the presentation before **Tuesday 25 February**.

Oscar Thomas: oscarkokako@gmail.com.

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It costs \$90 a year, and for students it's just \$45 a year:
www.birdsnz.org.nz

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2025 NZ Bird Conference

Registration now open



The 2025 Birds New Zealand Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held in Auckland 31 May to 2 June during King's Birthday weekend.

All events and meals will be at the [Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel](#)

The deadline for early-bird registration is 28th February 2025.

Abstracts must be submitted by 31st March.

Conference details are available [here](#)

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Fledgling Fund Grant

Student members are encouraged to present their projects and apply for a Fledgling Fund Grant birdsanz.org.nz/awards-and-prizes/notornis-and-conference-awards/fledgling-grant/ by no later than **28 February**.

Scholarships

Applications for this year's David Medway Scholarship are now invited and will **close on 30 March** birdsanz.org.nz/news/david-medway-scholarship/

All details, criteria and application form are available at birdsanz.org.nz/funding/david-medway-scholarship/

Applications for the Marj Davis Scholarship are now invited and will **close on 30 March** birdsanz.org.nz/news/marj-davis-scholarship/

All details, criteria and application form are available at birdsanz.org.nz/funding/marj-davis-scholarship/

News items

An online workshop inspiring renewed interest in moult studies



An online workshop about recording moult in the plumage of birds was held by Birds New Zealand on 5th February 2025.

Nearly 100 participants took part in the online workshop. Proceedings were recorded and will be made available as an educational resource on the Birds New Zealand website.

Funding for the workshop was provided by the [Birds New Zealand Research Fund](#)

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/an-online-workshop-inspiring-renewed-interest-in-moult-studies/>

Horsfield's bronze-cuckoo added to the New Zealand list

Aotearoa New Zealand is a long way from anywhere. Despite being 2,000 km from the nearest continent, vagrant land birds regularly find their way across the Tasman Sea – though some don't quite make it. Bird curator Colin Miskelly describes the latest new species to come to grief on our shores.



Read more at <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2025/01/22/a-new-bird-for-new-zealand-horsfields-bronze-cuckoo/> and <https://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/horsfield-s-bronze-cuckoo>

Newsletters

Waikato Newsletter – Feb 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Waikato-2502.pdf>

Articles

Rakitu Island weka genomics (2023 PAF) – Summary report:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2023-PAF-Weka-genetic-research-Summary-article-2502.pdf>

Summer Wader Count Sunday 24 November

	SIPO	VOC	Pied Stilt	Banded Dotterel	Spur winged Plover	Bar tailed Godwit
Karitane	11	6	17		12	170
Blueskin Bay	54	16	3		1	472
Aramoana	43	3	1		3	365
West Harbour	57	2				
East Harbour	1	19				
Papanui Inlet	64	8	6		9	
Hoopers Inlet	5	2			2	542
Catlins	35	5	7		3	512
Pleasant Estuary	9	5	5		47	246
Total 2024	279	66	39	0	77	2307
Total 2023	433	141	89	11	112	2415
Total 2022	544	76	98	4	24	2217
Total 2021	657	54	266	17	162	1904
Total 2020	839	85	156	3	118	1982
Total 2019	437	76	40	7	44	2435
Total 2018	270	45	97	43	30	1723

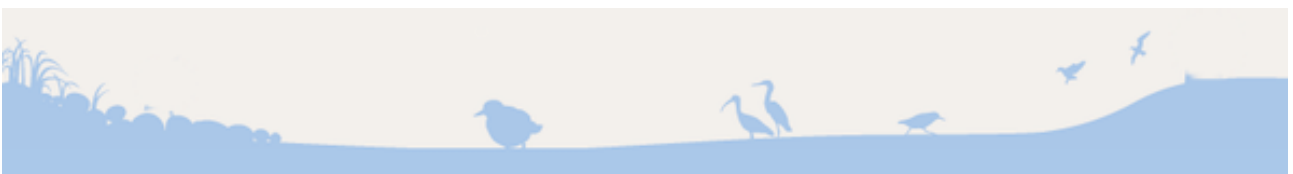
Many thanks to all volunteers who participated in the summer wader count for 2024, particularly those who counted at unfamiliar sites.

We couldn't have asked for better conditions. Also, high tide occurred at a very convenient time...late morning.

Note that no banded dotterels were seen, and numbers of bar-tailed godwits were similar to the previous two summer counts.

Looking at past years I wonder what made the summer of 2021 such a good season for pied stilts?

M.Johnstone



Notes from the Regional Representative

On 2 February, I lead a group of 10 birders (new and learning) with the Whakatipu Wildlife Trust in a birding outing from the Twelve Mile Delta to Bobs Cove. The morning's highlights were hearing a shining cuckoo and seeing a tui fly onto a nest above one of the local trapping group traps. Later in the morning during a snack break, a Black shag/ Māpunga flew past at close quarters giving the group an excellent view of its black plumage and yellow skin around the base of bill and eyes.



I was also privileged along with Oscar Thomas and Ela Hunt to witness the release of takahe into the Rees Valley along with a large gallery of people involved in supporting the achievement of this incredible milestone in the recovery of this species. The takahe will be monitored by the staff of the Southern Lakes Sanctuary.



Release of takahe, Rees Valley

Otago Branch projects for 2025

Our dedicated committee met via Zoom on the 19 February and have agreed the 2025 Branch Projects.

Bittern / Crake Inventory project with the Matuku Muster at a few sites where bittern are confirmed (subject to the capacity of members to lead). Analysing the data from the project is the primary focus of 2025. Details of Matuku Muster opportunities will be provided closer to the time (August/ September).

Town Belt Project An annual public 5MBC will be run in Oct/ Nov. Data from the Town Belt will be shared with DCC, Sanctuary City and Town Belt Kaitiaki (if the project is confirmed to continue).

Dunedin Botanic Gardens guided birding - in September

AAPES - support for birding (introduction and 5MBC methods) will be provided subject to interest by the AAPES.

Wild Dunedin

Tomahawk Lagoon Birdwatching – 13/4/2025 10:00 – 12:00

Graeme Loh – the Prion People of the St Clair Cliffs – Earth Day 22 April 7 -9 pm Tūhura-Barclay Theatre

Harbour Survey - a repeat of the 1977/78, 1988/89, 2013/14 Harbour Surveys will start in about September. This will involve 24 counts over 24 months at high tide across 8 areas of the Harbour. Details will be provided once confirmed.

National Wader Counts - June/ November

Robins - A new site is required to continue the robin monitoring project beyond the fence. Details of project continuance will be provided when available.

Preparation for **Conference 2026** in Wanaka.

Dawn Palmer

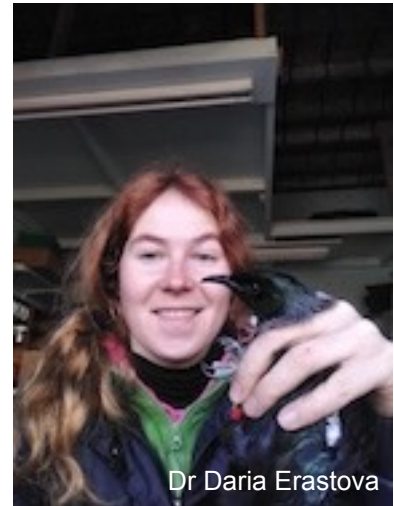
Episode 13 of Rewilding in Action

Feeding Wild Birds Sugar Water: Time for a Rethink



Tui, korimako/bellbirds and tauhou/silvereyes are much loved gardens birds. By consuming the nectar of native plants they are also important pollinators for rewilding our native forests. Is it a good idea to feed wild birds artificially? Does feeding them a solution of sugar in water help or harm them? And could bird feeders help spread the bird flu variant H1N1 when it reaches our shores?

Grab yourself a cuppa and put your feet up to listen-in to Rewilding in Action with Maureen and her guest Dr Daria Erastova.



Dr Daria Erastova

This show was broadcast on OAR 105.4FM Dunedin - <http://oar.org.nz>

First aired on the 20th February 2025 on [OAR FM Dunedin - Community Access Media](#) (repeat on Saturday)

Listen to the episode on:

- OAR FM Website: <https://oar.org.nz/shows/rewilding-in-action/>
- Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/.../rewilding-in.../id1764395381>
- Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/47mhmm6KwMINa2k3TzMq8T>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLbVnVybPKI&list=PLb6ValA0zfn8J7JtoH0cuZrDOI0nNI070>
- or your favourite podcast provider! <https://pod.link/1764395381>

Maureen Howard

Programme 2025

Birds NZ Otago Branch meetings for 2025 will be held on the 4th Tuesday of the month (from February to November) in the Benham Seminar Room, 2nd floor of the Benham Building, [Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street](#), starting at 7.30pm. Please arrive prior to this as the doors lock automatically unless someone is there to open them from inside.

Tuesday 25 February	Ornithological Potpourri (Member's summer bird highlights)
Tuesday 25 March	Ela Hunt - Exploring the Subantarctic Islands
Tuesday 22 April	Graeme Loh - Prion People of the St Clair Cliffs (Venue is Barclay Theatre, Tūhura Otago Museum, earlier 7pm start)
Tuesday 27 May	Janina Castro - Reflections on Bird Window Strikes in the Philippines
Tuesday 24 June	Jerusha Bennett - Bird parasites in Otago

Regular Field trips are held, usually on first Saturdays or Sundays. Check for details within the newsletters. We carpool for these trips and share expenses.

Suggestions for locations for field trips and atlassing trips, and offers to help lead trips would really be appreciated, please contact Dawn birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz

Contributions for the next newsletter should reach the editor by **18 March** sodlin@gmail.com

Disclaimer

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