

Matuku: Birds NZ

Waikato Region

Newsletter March 2025



Matuku/bittern image by Imogen Warren

Upcoming Events

Meetings

- March 19th 7.30pm
- April 16th 7.30 pm

Trips

- Shorebird ID 1/2 day event
Saturday 5th April
- Hamilton Lake bird census
10 am second Sunday of the month.
 - 9 March
 - 13 April

Regional newsletters

Interested to know what is happening in other parts of the country? Read the other regional newsletters [here](#)

Events

Annual Birds NZ conference -
Kings Birthday 31 May-2nd June
Auckland

March Meeting Wednesday 19th

Topic: Birdwatching Technology

Join us for an engaging evening with Jesse Golden. Cornell University's digital bird field guide, Merlin, has dramatically changed the landscape of birdwatching in North America. Jesse will demonstrate the app's Sound ID feature (only partially functional in NZ), discuss other ways in which technology has changed birdwatching and how he keeps motivated to submit eBird checklists.

Jesse Golden arrived in New Zealand 10 years ago from the United States, and was first exposed to birdwatching by his Dad who kept numerous bird feeders. For years, he made fun of birdwatchers until he needed to pass a bird identification course at uni. In 2012, he started his first year list as a means to study for that course and kept up with the hobby ever since.

Wednesday March 19th 7.30 pm at 5 Northway Street, Te Rapa at the DOC building. Press the buzzer to get entry or as a last resort ring 021 2032982. Non-members welcome.

April Meeting Wednesday 16th

Members show & tell plus bird ID

Come along and share for 5 - 10 minutes where you've been and what birdlife you've seen. It could be something recent or an older trip. Bring objects or photos. Photos and powerpoint presentations or links to online documents should be sent in advance to birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com.

We will also be sharpening our bird ID skills. We'll be looking at the similarities and differences between skylarks and pipits. Can you tell the difference between these 2 birds?

Wednesday April 16th 7.30 pm at 5 Northway Street, Te Rapa at the DOC building. Non-members welcome.

February meeting recap

It was encouraging to see a good number of new and old members turn up for our February meeting where we shared bird sightings and places visited since our November meeting. Jesse G mentioned the artificial wetland at Tuumata Rise in Rukura, Hamilton as a newer birding location in Hamilton city. Bird sightings reported: Jeanette B blue duck at Raurimu, kaka and yellow crowned parakeet at Pureora, Ken D was birding at Miranda and Te Aroha and spotted little egret, red neck stint, banded rail. Jessie G spotted short tailed shearwater and buller shearwater at Hahei very close to shore. The group pelagic trip from Tutukata to the continental shelf in November was a great success with over 100,000 seabirds seen and a number of species seen and Nick C was happy to see grey ternlets. Unfortunately because the weather was beautifully calm it didn't attract the albatross but it was a fabulous day out enjoyed by all. A member brought a thrush and blackbird nest along so people could see the difference between the two. The thrush nest was quite a messy creation with items sticking far out from the nest while the blackbird nest was a very tidy affair! Members approved the purchase of a banner to advertise BirdsNZ meetings and events.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to Waikato Birds NZ and look forward to seeing you at our meetings and trips.

Bogdan McLachlan, Ethan Morgan, Jos Kater and Hamilton Zoo, Keely Muir and Nicki van Zyl

Trip Reports

February Kawhia, Aotea & Raglan Harbour census

The annual summer harbour bird census of Aotea and Kawhia harbour took place on the 15th of February. The Raglan census was cancelled due to weather & boat unavailability. Special thanks goes to Sue Duncan and partner Nick for providing boat transport for Aotea Harbour as our usual skipper was unable to help out. Canada geese were scarce as people have been culling birds and destroying eggs to reduce the population. Aotea residents reported finding dead geese washing up on the shore. Conditions were a bit choppy and made birding on the boats challenging at times. Thanks to all the volunteers who took part. The next census is mid-late June.

March - farewell to the godwits trip recap

6 members enjoyed a trip to Miranda Shorebird Centre, where we hired a telescope for those without one which allowed us to spot some less common birds amongst the thousands of godwits, South Island oyster catchers (SIPO) and red knots. Other species seen were: golden plover, red-necked stint, sharp-tailed sandpiper, wrybill, pied stilt, banded dotterel, caspian tern, white-faced heron, royal spoonbill and NZ dotterel. The red knots and godwits are colouring up nicely with their breeding plumage which will help them blend in when they reach the arctic soon to breed. We then visited the Piako wader roost which is a newly created wetland with a lovely large hide. We were hoping to see the glossy ibis, cattle egret and wimbrel that Mike D had seen last week but to no avail however there were plenty of other birds including some banded dotterel and an immature black shag kept us entertained



Hamilton Lake Survey Results

Barry reports February was a lovely census with many activities and people at the lake. It was too hot for many of the birds – no Domestic Ducks, fewer Blackbirds, no Starlings or White-Faced Herons. The Dabchick was present the first time since last October. They observed a cute Goldfinch chick having a bath in the water at the side of the lake and Barry narrowly escaped being hit by a falling Rock Pigeon's egg from one of the Palm trees!

2024 lake survey interesting titbits

- The most common water birds seen at the lake are the Mallard, Pukeko, Coot, Canada Goose, Shags, domestic Geese and a couple of White Aylesbury Duck.
- Mallard numbers have dwindled in number considerably over the last 30 years. In August many leave to breed in hedge rows and quiet shady nooks
- Sometimes all 4 species of shags can be seen in 1 survey

Many thanks to Liz Wang, Michael & Ruth Wenham, Lyn & Paul Cuming, Gladys Hollick, Maggie, Minnie, and Shirley and to Barry Friend for organizing the Hamilton Lake survey for many years.

All welcome to assist Barry on his monthly walks the second Sunday of the month eurobaz@xtra.co.nz
Find here links to the annual report and data

Birds NZ conference - photo competition

Conference attendees are invited to enter their photos in the 2025 Birds NZ Conference photo competition.

There are 4 categories:

1. Bird Portrait
2. Bird in Habitat
3. Bird in Flight
4. Bird Behaviour

Details can be found [here](#)

Funding available

Funding is available for members who are doing bird research or disseminating information about birds. Preferred projects are national studies or regional projects. [Applications close 30 March.](#)

Attention students - scholarships available

There are several scholarships open to students conducting research in ornithology.

David Medway [scholarship](#)

Marj Davis [scholarship](#).

Coot and chick by Barry Friend

Recent articles

- [Horsfield's bronze cuckoo found](#)
- [Moult workshop report](#)
- [Population genetics of North Island Weka](#)

For sale/wanted to buy

This is a new part of the newsletter where members can advertise birding books, maps, and birding related equipment for sale. Please contact the seller directly for inquiries and sales. To list an item to sell or wanted to buy contact

birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com

[WANTED](#) telescope & tripod in reasonable condition for the Waikato Branch for census counting. Contact birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com

UPCOMING MEETINGS 2025

Meetings 3rd Wednesday of the month 7.30 pm at 5 Northway Street, Te Rapa



MARCH 19th Birdwatching technology

Jesse Goldon shares some technology he uses when birding.

APRIL 16th Members show and tell

Come along and share in 5 - 10 minutes where you've been and what birdlife you've seen. You are encouraged to send through photos and powerpoints in advance. It could be something recent or an older trip.

MAY 21st Fairy terns/birds in the Waikato

Ellen Webb on fairy tern monitoring

JUNE 18th conference recap

Birds 2025 conference recap and discussion

JULY 16th

Booming Kokako population at Rotoehu Ecological Trust followed by Waikato River and lake bird surveys

Dr Chris Bycroft, Senior Ecologist, Wildlands Rotorua talks about his involvement with kokako recovery and doing surveys on Waikato's waterways.

AUGUST 20th Birds & Bites Movie Night

Midwinter movie and pot luck dinner

SEPTEMBER 17th Have your say

Annual planning meeting for 2026 events & speakers

OCTOBER 15th

Speaker to be confirmed

NOVEMBER 19th

Speaker to be confirmed

DECEMBER - No meeting

UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS



APRIL 5th bird ID workshop

Learn to identify shorebirds with a hands on workshop at Miranda Shorebird Centre. We will be studying what birds we see on our local harbours, how to identify species, paying particular attention to similar looking species, bird counting techniques and then putting this all in practice in the field. This is an affordable half day course with limited numbers. This workshop is perfect for those who want to gain confidence in bird ID and for those who want to join the regular harbour censuses we conduct multiple times a year. Cost TBC. Contact Jesse Golden for details gazelle.golden@gmail.com

MAY - kiwi

An evening of Kiwi watching and listening in the bush date TBC Contact Jesse Golden for details gazelle.golden@gmail.com

JUNE - conference & bird census

Annual Birds New Zealand Conference in Auckland King's birthday weekend 31st May-2nd June (details below)

Aotea Harbour, Raglan Harbour and Kawhia Harbour bird census date TBC

JULY - garden survey

Annual garden bird survey

AUGUST 24th - bittern spotting

Join us for a bit of bittern spotting down in Marokopa on Sunday August 24th

SEPTEMBER

TBC

OCTOBER

TBC

NOVEMBER - harbour census

Aotea Harbour, Raglan Harbour and Kawhia Harbour bird census date TBC

DECEMBER - no event planned

Photo - pelagic Trip November 2024 - Tutukaka/Poor Knights Islands





BIRDS NZ

CONFERENCE & AGM

AUCKLAND

31 MAY - 2 JUNE 2025

(King's Birthday Weekend)

Join us for a weekend of fascinating lectures and presentations focusing on the study and enjoyment of birds!

Take part in exciting field trips and share the great company of other members!

Full details and registration form at birdsNZ.org.nz



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2025 NZ Bird Conference & Birds New Zealand AGM

The 2025 NZ Bird Conference & Annual General Meeting will be held in Auckland on King's Birthday weekend (31 May-2 June) at the Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel. See <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/nz-bird-conference-2025/> for details.

Professor Dianne Brunton (University of Auckland) and Matt Maitland (Senior Ranger Open Sanctuaries, Auckland Council) will be the plenary speakers. Her subject is "Highlights from 35 years of researching birdsong, behaviour, and conservation in New Zealand." His is a "20 year retrospective of Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary".

30 May 2025 (Friday)

18:00 – 19:00 Registration at Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel

31 May 2025 (Saturday) at Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel

08:00 – 09:00 Registration. Tea/coffee available

09:00 – 09:30 Opening

09:30 – 17:00 Scientific Day One

19:00 Informal Dinner

1 June 2025 (Sunday) at Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel

08:00 – 09:00 Registration. Tea/coffee available

09:00 – 15:00 Scientific Day Two

15:30 AGM and Awards

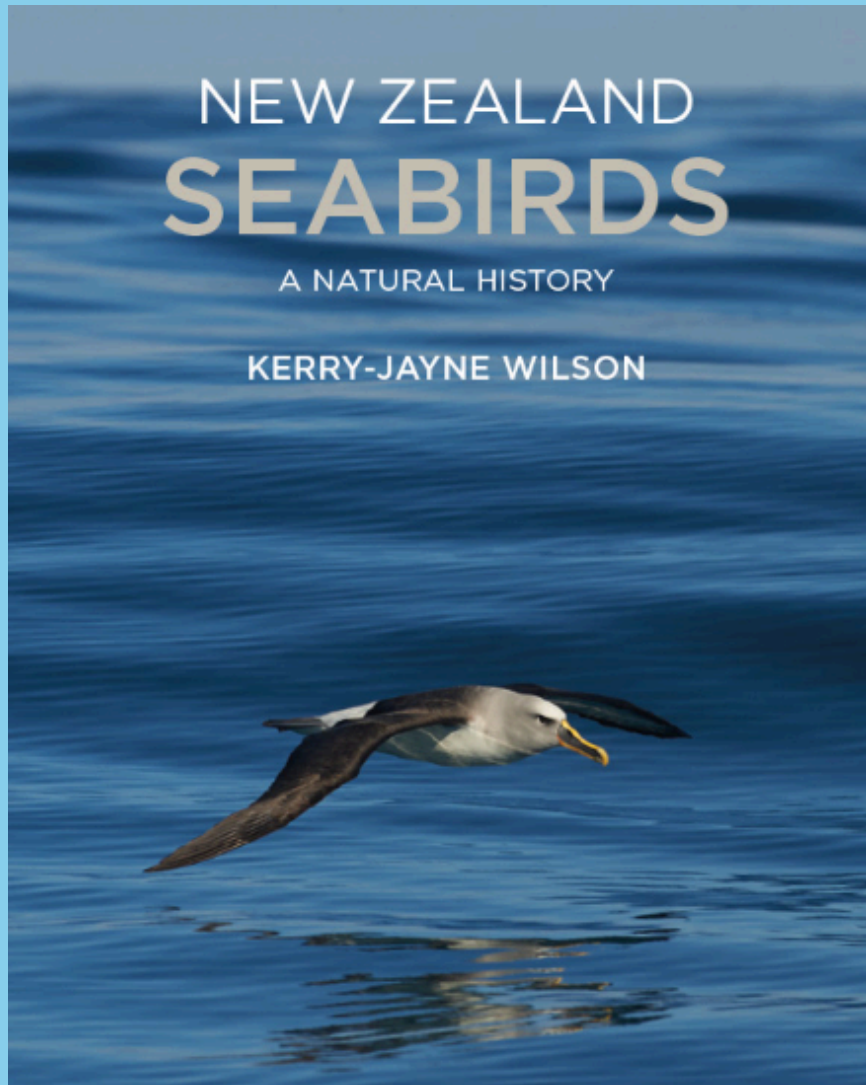
19:00 Conference Dinner

2 June 2025 (Monday) Field trip options

Tiritiri Matangi Island; Tawharanui Regional Park; Behind the Scenes at the Museum – bird collection; Ambury Regional Park; Pelagic trip to Mokohinau Islands.

There will also be the usual photo competition at the conference.

DON'T MISS OUT ON YOUR CHANCE TO PURCHASE THIS BOOK FOR A VERY REASONABLE COST



New Zealand is the seabird capital of the world – no other country has so many species of breeding seabirds, while about a third of them are only found here. *New Zealand Seabirds*, the first book to be written specifically about these birds, describes the different groups of seabirds, where in New Zealand they occur, their breeding biology, feeding behaviours, the conservation threats they face, and the vast distances they often travel to feed and breed. Written using non-technical language by ornithologist Kerry-Jayne Wilson, this book is an essential companion for anyone who appreciates the wildlife of our coastlines and the oceans beyond.

Recommended retail price is \$49.99 however we have a special deal where this book can be purchased by donation. All proceeds to be donated to conservation

TO PURCHASE contact birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com

SO MANY WAYS TO HELP OUR BIRDS



Red-crowned Kākāriki
(Image: Michael Szabo)



Antipodes Island Parakeet
(Image: Michael Szabo)



Orange-fronted Kākāriki
(Image: Michael Szabo)

The Birds New Zealand Research Fund is funding new research on our endemic parakeets to help inform evidence-based conservation management.

You can join us right now for \$80 a year and for students it's just \$40 a year:

www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/

JOIN US NOW



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Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa