



BIRDS
NEW ZEALAND
Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter April 2025

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From the Regional Representative

The Bar-tailed Godwits that are migrating to Alaska this autumn are now well on their way. Jesse Conklin, who has been keeping an eye on the Godwits here for 18 years was at the Manawatū River this March. We met him when we were on the Lake Omanu trip and he expected the last few Godwits to leave Saturday 29th March. Paul Gibson from Whanganui also keeps an eye on the Godwits there. They might also have left last Saturday.

We had very good weather on the trip to Lake Omanu - see report later in this Newsletter. It was nice to have one of our younger members on the trip.

The 2025 Birds New Zealand Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held in **Auckland from 31st May-2nd June.**

I am still in the process of organizing speakers for coming meetings, so ideas are still welcome. If you are interested in leading a bird trip, please contact me.

Please send me photos and notes about your bird adventures and sightings or other bird news for the newsletter on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com.

Deadline for the May issue is 27th April 2025.



Grey Warbler by Chris Tuffley

Last meeting 12th March 2025

25 people came to our Annual General Meeting and to hear Chris Tuffley's talk about Birds of the Ruahine. Chris described how the New Zealand Bird Atlas project got him into serious birding and to make a goal of covering all the atlas squares in the Ruahine. Chris showed where the different species had been observed and his beautiful photos of some of the birds. There was an opportunity to learn or re-learn some of the bird songs and calls. Thank you, Chris, for a great talk.

Zoe Stone mentioned that Horizons was doing a survey of Fernbirds at Fernbird Flats at Manawatu estuary and that help with this would be useful. There was general agreement that this could be a good opportunity for a branch Field Trip.

Minutes of Birds NZ Manawatū Annual General Meeting

2025 Date: 12 March 2025

Start of meeting: 7.16pm

Present: Stephen Legg (M), Kirsten Olsen (M), Cleland Wallace (M), Wayne Salmons (M), Suzanne Orchard (M), Diane Monaghan, Ian van Tets (M), Trevor Jones, Chris Tuffley (M), Camron Murphy, Mali Swanney, John Gilbert, Julie Gilbert, Phil Battley (M), Sue Moore (M), Neill Haggarty (M), Lindsay Davies (M), Jennifer Wasley (M), Pamela Slack (M), Jackie Carr (M), Riley Gudop, Zoe Stone, Megan Jolly (M), Ed Minot (M), Nicky Stone (M), Margaret McKenzie, Mary Nettle (17 members (M), 10 non-members).

Apologies: John Cockram (M)

RR Report: Circulated in advance by email. Summarised by Kirsten Olsen and accepted.

Finances: Circulated in advance by email. Presented by Jennifer Wasley and accepted. The branch has \$9610.27 as of 31 Dec 2024. Comment from floor that funds are healthy so could be used to support some activities.

Election of Committee members:

Regional Representative (appointed by Birds NZ Council) Kirsten Olsen.

Treasurer: Jennifer Wasley

Regional Recorder: Neill Haggarty

Wader Coordinator: Phil Battley

Trip Coordinator: Neill Haggarty and Jackie Carr volunteered to help Kirsten Olsen coordinate trips.

Newsletter editor: Kirsten Olsen does this at present. Looking for a volunteer.

Vote of thanks: Kirsten Olsen was thanked with applause, for getting things up and going and for all her hard work, which was much appreciated.

End of meeting: 7.35pm

Reporter: Stephen Legg.

Bird update

Paul Gibson has been keeping an eye on the Bar-tailed Godwits at the Whanganui River mouth. He has particularly kept an eye on AJD. In the last email I received from him (Wednesday 27 March 2025) AJD had not left yet. He attached some very nice photos of AJD.



Trip report (by Stephen Legg and Kirsten Olsen): Lake Omanu, 29th March 2025, organised by Kirsten Olsen

We were five people (Jackie, Stephen, Liam, Neill and Kirsten) that headed to Lake Omanu, on the outskirts of Foxton Beach, on a beautiful Saturday morning. It was great that Liam joined us, as we like to have younger members on these trips. Kirsten had obtained a permit to enter from Fish & Game New Zealand. We drove in, using the Right of Way, to just before Little Lake Omanu. There was not much to see in the Little Lake, but on the field to the east, roosted 250 Canada Geese. When we reached Lake Omanu itself, we played the call of the Spotless Crake. We heard one Spotless Crake calling back. It sounded very close but we did not manage to see it. We continued along the west side of the lake (it is the only side you can get along) and stopped to look at the birds, when there was an opening in the vegetation.



Lake Omanu, photo by Kirsten Olsen

The morning was maybe not the best time to look at the birds there, because we were looking towards the sun, which made it difficult to identify the birds. But we spent so much time there that the sun rose more and changed direction, making bird spotting a bit easier. At the north end of the lake, we sat down and had our lunches. We saw and heard 35 species at both of the lakes. Not bad! Highlights in addition to the Spotless Crake were 6 Royal Spoonbills and 5 Black Fronted Dotterels. We made two eBird checklists from the lakes, but the one from the big lake had all the birds that we identified. You can see the full checklist by following this link:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S221410786>

Trip report: Lake Omanu (continued)

After visiting Lake Omanu, we went to the well-known bird viewing platform at the end of Palmers Rd to look at the birds at Manawatū River Estuary. It was just past high tide when we arrived. Perfect timing. Here we saw 19 species, which added 11 to the total for the trip. There were still 58 Bar-tailed Godwits at the estuary. We also saw 17 Wrybills, seven Pacific Golden Plovers, but only one Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (whereas there had previously been three there for a long time). See the total list of birds on eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S221424701>

The most exciting sighting was of an Arctic Skua. It suddenly appeared, flying in from the west. It immediately attacked, chasing the White-fronted terns and Black-billed Gulls, all of whom suddenly flew up and mostly away. We had a really good look at the Skua, though no one got a photo. Liam got three new lifers, which was really cool.

We met Jesse Conklin, who has been keeping an eye on the Godwits here for 18 years. He was at the estuary to record the last few departing on their journey to Alaska. He expected that the last five to seven birds would leave that afternoon. It is amazing and fascinating how much he told us about Godwit behaviour.

There is an eBird trip report on eBird which can be accessed via this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/345605?view=checklists> .



Lunch at Lake Omanu, Photo by Kirsten Olsen

New Banded dotterel migration research - seeks help with resightings of banded Banded dotterels

The Department of Conservation and the Department of Ornithology at the Max Planck Institute for Biological Intelligence (Seewiesen, Germany) are embarking on a five-year research project investigating banded dotterel migration and use of wintering sites.

We began fieldwork in the recent breeding season, banding approximately 280 adult banded dotterels (as well as some chicks) with either colour bands or 2-character, white alphanumeric flags. Some birds also received a PTT or GPS tracking device.

We would love the help of Birds NZ members who are out and about birding (locally or on holiday) to look out for marked banded dotterels. If anyone sees a marked banded dotterel, please could they give us a heads up by emailing:

b.dot.resighting@doc.govt.nz

with details of the marked bird they saw, the location and the time and date. Look out for more details in the March issue of the Birds New Zealand magazine.



Banded Banded dotterel by Ben Ackerley, eBird Checklist S151583855

Upcoming meetings

Birds NZ Manawatū meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, **7:15pm in Val Kenward Room at the Palmerston North Community Leisure Centre, 569 Ferguson Street.**

The meetings start with a short introduction that includes a regional bird sighting update and notices. At the end of the meeting there is the opportunity for all to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

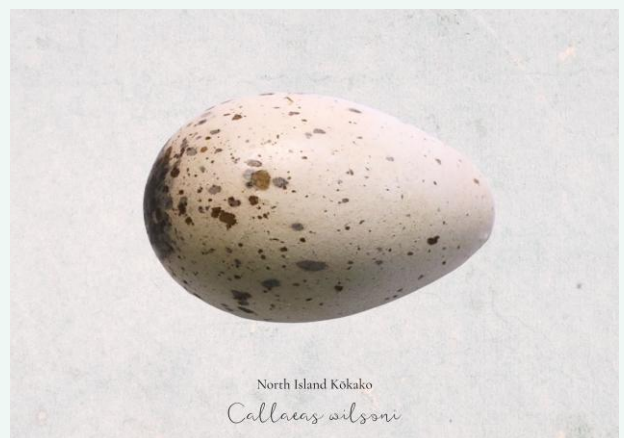
Next meeting 9 April 2025

Talk: Bird Eggs - The Most Perfect Thing

Speaker: Tara Swan

Eggs truly are the most perfect thing. How such a tiny thing can create such an incredible life has fascinated people around the world for years. The diversity of eggs, the shape, colour and size of each has attracted studies and collections of so many different species. During this talk, we will explore the variety of NZ's species, and what makes them so unique and special. From the kiwi egg and how that develops, through to the colourful garden bird eggs we all know and love.

Tara Swan, from Pukaha National Wildlife Centre has been working with wildlife for over a decade in breed-for-release programs of rare and endangered birds. From artificial incubation of kiwi eggs, through to assisted hatching Whio eggs, Tara's journey into the world of eggs has become more than just a day at work. Combining her love of photography and wildlife, she has set about documenting NZ bird eggs, and has begun collating these images into an identification guide.



Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

14th May, 11th June Nikki McArthur; A summer census of shorebirds on the braided rivers and coastline of the Manawatū / Whanganui region , **9th July, 13th August, 10th September, 8th October, 12 November**

Links to other regions' newsletters

News items:

Waikato Newsletter – March 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Waikato-2503.pdf>

Nelson Newsletter – February 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/nelson-newsletter/>

Otago Newsletter – February 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/otago-newsletter/>

Otago Newsletter – March 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/otago-newsletter/>

South Auckland Newsletter – February 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/>

Notornis – March edition now online:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/notornis-march-edition-now-online/>

Occasional Publication - Game bird banding in NZ:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/game-bird-banding-in-new-zealand/>

Birds New Zealand Auckland Regional Programme 2025 JAN – JULY 2025

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Auckland-Programme-Jan-Jul-2025.pdf>



Notices

2025 BirdsNZ Conference & 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.

13th Australasian Ornithological Conference

BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand are excited to announce the **13th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC)** will be held in **Perth/Boorloo**.

The AOC will be held from **Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 November 2025** at the University of Western Australia, with side events planned for the days before and after. The AOC is the primary conference for BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand. The largest biennial gathering of amateur and professional ornithologists and avian researchers from Australasia. Key dates will be available soon. Sign up for email updates at <https://birdlife.org.au/events/australasian-ornithological-conference-2025/>

Health and safety

Please, if you have any incident that could have resulted in injury or results in injury while participating in Birds New Zealand activity, report it to the Regional Representative. In Manawatū it is Kirsten Olsen, email birds.manawatu@birdsnz.org.nz or phone 027 354 6010

The Birds New Zealand Council has asked the regions to include health and safety information in the newsletters.

Health and safety of Birds New Zealand's members when they participate in Birds NZ organised activity, like meetings, collection of data and fieldtrips, is important to the Council. The [Health and Safety Policy](#) can be found on Birds NZ webpage. Press [Here](#) to get to the policy.

To make it more practicable, the Council has developed [health and safety guidelines for field trips](#) that also can be found on the website.

The guidelines state: *“At a health and safety briefing before a field trip commences the trip leader will describe the route, any specific or potential physical difficulties that might be encountered, and the approximate times for lunch, tea breaks and the end of the trip.”*

It further states: *“If a member has an allergy or medical condition, they should bring their own anti-histamines and personal medications. The trip leader should be advised of medical problems a member has and how to deal with them. Bring a mobile phone and share phone numbers with others. Don't hesitate to call 111 for any incidents involving injury.” (...)*
“The trip leader should check the weather forecast for the day and, if necessary, monitor the weather conditions during the trip. Turn back if the weather deteriorates. Each member should bring sufficient food and drinking water for their personal needs.”

Finally, it is stated in the policy:

“Instances of accidents or ill health of members and others whilst carrying out activities in any capacity for Birds New Zealand are required to be reported promptly to the Regional Representative who in turn will advise the President without delay. Records of accidents will be recorded in the annual reports of Regional Representatives.”

Contribution to future Birds NZ Manawatu newsletters

Please send photos and text that would be appropriate for this newsletter, to Kirsten Olsen kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com .

Deadline for May 2025 issue: 27 April 2025

Please send your contributions to: kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com

Contacts in Birds New Zealand Manawatū Branch:

Regional representative: Kirsten Olsen

email: birds.manawatu@birdsNZ.org.nz

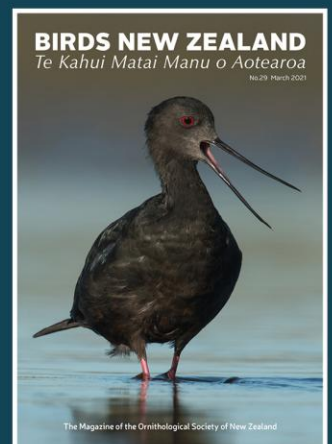
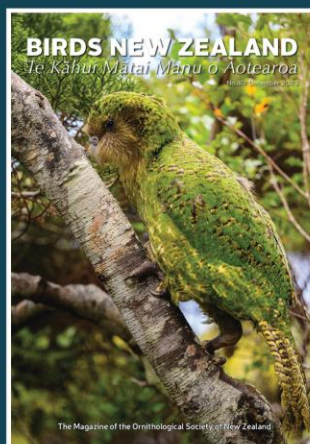
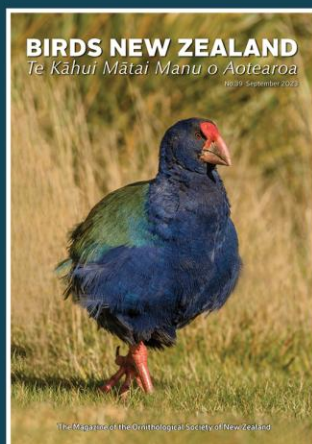
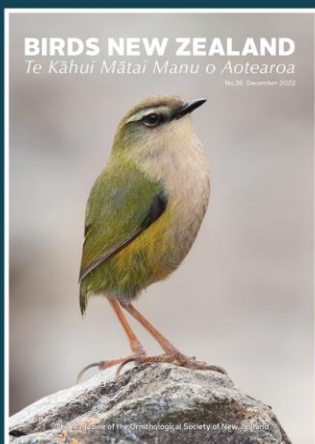
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

email: iolaandneill@inspire.net.nz

Please report interesting bird sightings to Neill

Wader count coordinator: Phil Battley

email: p.battley@massey.ac.nz



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It costs \$90 a year, and for students it's just \$45 a year:
<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/donate/>

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