



BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter May 2025

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Pacific golden plover by Neill Haggarty

From the Regional Representative

Not much has happened since the last newsletter birdwise. But we have three events coming up next month. First the trip to Pohangina wetlands this coming Sunday 4th April, then eBird global big day, where I am organizing a trip to Pauatahanui on Saturday 10 May (for details see later in the newsletter).

Finally this month we have our next meeting on Wednesday 14 May. We are trying a new format for this meeting. It is called “Tell us about your favorite bird watching place or your exciting bird experience” (see later in the newsletter).

I hope you have been out and about over Easter (before the weather went bad) and have had some good bird experiences. Stephen and I went caving in the Honeycomb Hill Cave area near Karamea with the Manawatu Caving Club, who had obtained a special permission permit. We found a bush Moa skeleton nicely layed out and several other piles of larger and smaller bones. Here are some facts from the Oparara website

(<https://www.oparara.co.nz/history-of-the-oparara>)

“The caves are also home to the largest and most varied collection of subfossil bird bones ever found in New Zealand. More than 50 bird species, many of them extinct, have been recorded.

These include nine different moa species, the giant flightless goose, Finsch’s duck, the giant NZ eagle (Hokioi), the giant flightless rail, the flightless coot, the NZ owlet-nightjar and Stephen’s Island wren, as well as other rare NZ birds such as the kakapo, kokako, takahe, and yellowhead.

Petrel and shearwater remains show that these seabirds also once nested in the valley.

Many of the bones were washed into the caves as carcasses by rivers and streams, while others such as moas fell through holes in the cave roofs”.



Photo by Kirsten Olsen

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 on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com.

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 June issue is 26th May 2025.



Fleshfooted Shearwater by Chris Tuffley

Last meeting 9th April 2025

At our last meeting Tara Swan gave a very interesting talk about bird eggs. Tara really knows her bird eggs. As well as showing her many wonderful egg slides, she brought along a display case of unusual eggs, so we could see and feel them.

Some of the interesting information Tara gave us was:

- Birds can identify their own eggs by their unique spotty or speckly patterns;
- of course, Kiwi eggs are enormous, equivalent to a human giving birth to a 4-year-old child!;
- birds hardly ever re-use their nests because they become infested with lice;
- the only egg of the extinct Huia is a tiny fragment, which is carefully held at Te Papa National Museum (Tara had a replica of a Huia egg that was made by using this fragment);
- Tara's favourite/prettiest egg is that of the Yellowhammer, because of its beautiful marbling.



Photo by Stephen Legg



Photo by Stephen Legg

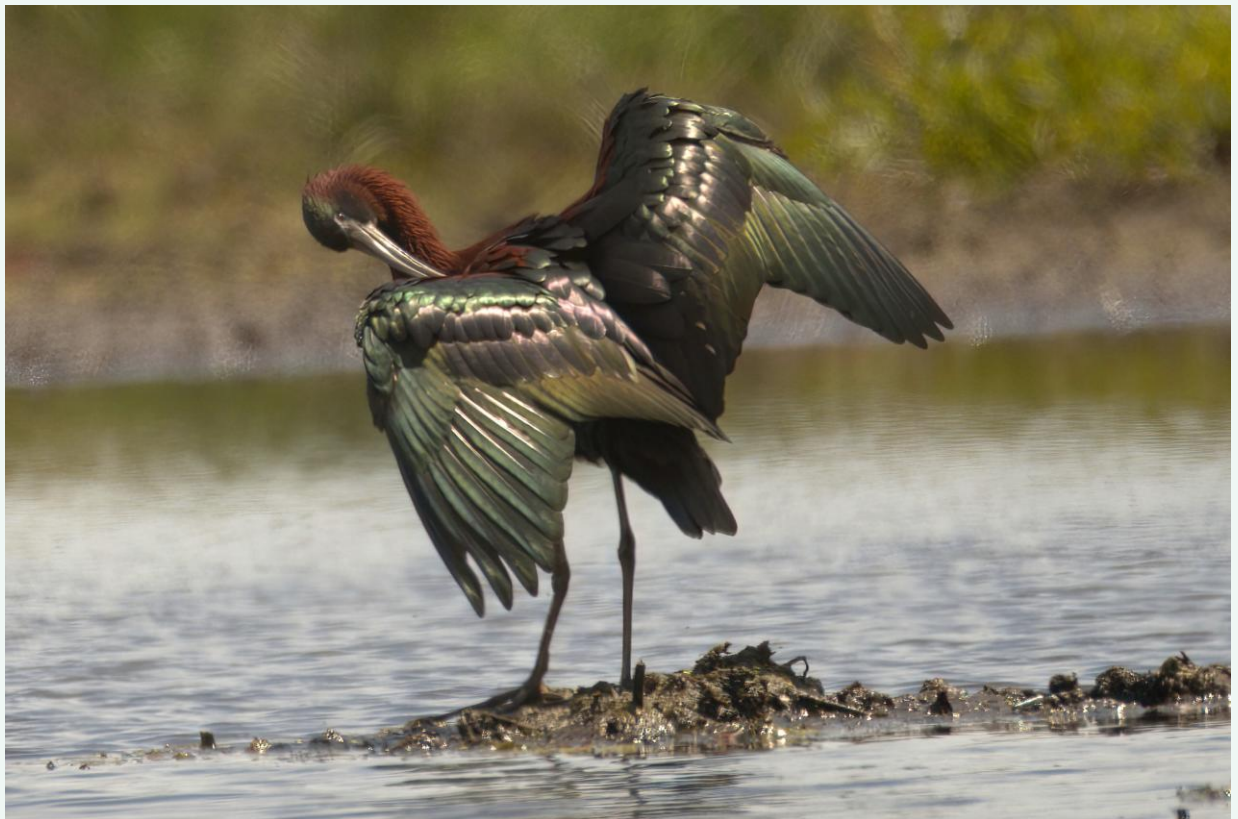
Bird update

Neill Hagarty has summarised some of the rare or interesting birds that have been reported in our region this April.

A Little tern was seen at sandspit at Manawatu estuary and a Fairy Prion and a Fluttering Shearwater have been seen off Foxton Beach.

At Waikawa Stream a Fernbird was reported. An Australasian Gannet was reported at both Waikawa and Foxton Beach. A Rook was seen at the Oxidation pond in Pahiatua.

Chris Tuffley saw Rifleman and Tomtit on Waitonga falls track and saw Whitehead and yellow Crowned Parakeet on the Track to Mangaehuehu Hut, where he also heard North Island Brown Kiwi.



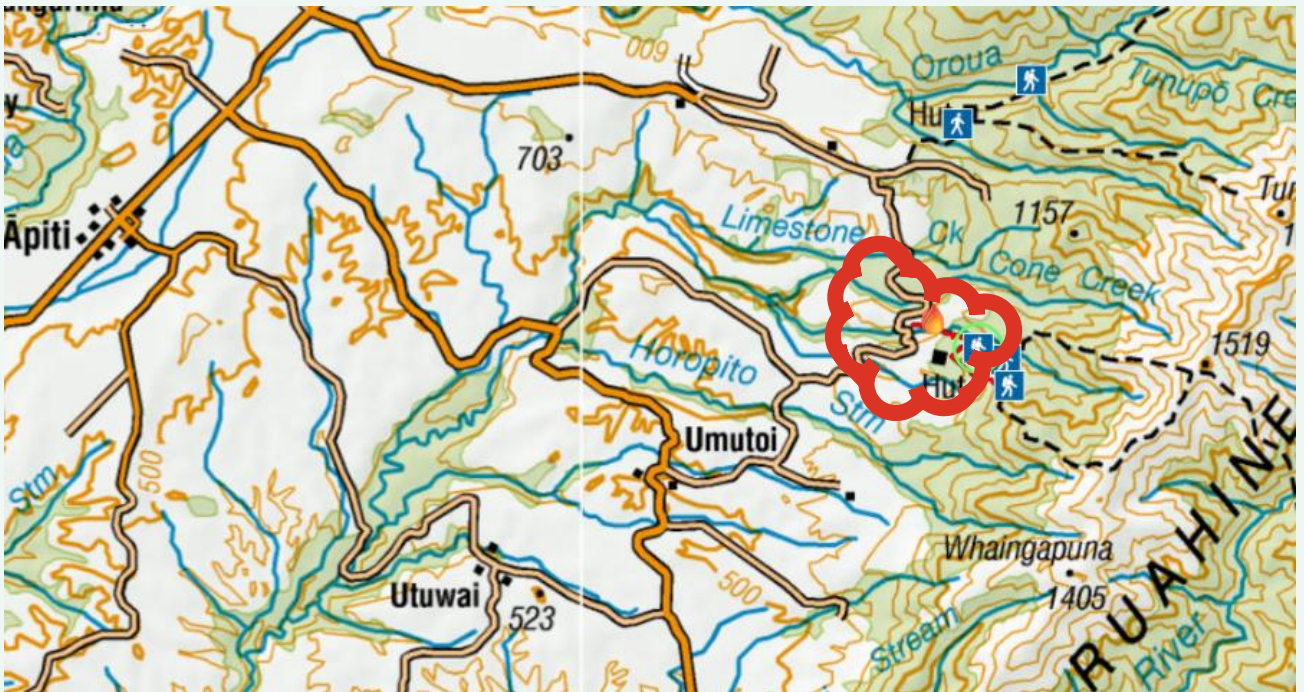
Glossy Ibis photo by Neill Hagarty (Historical)

Whio | Blue duck sighting

Phil Battley just emailed me about an exciting Whio sighting he and Sue Moore heard on Friday 23th April. Here is what he wrote:

Sue and I went up Knights track on Friday from the Deerford loop, and when we were coming out after dark and walking back to the car across the farm section, we head a pair of Whio from the stream. Totally unexpected and they are not known from there, but what a great surprise.

I have inserted a flame on the map below where they heard the Whio. The ebird checklist can be found here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S230680671>



Whio by Chris Tuffley

Pelagic birding by Chris Tuffley

In March I joined a Wellington branch pelagic birding trip in Cook Strait, organised by Michael Szabo. An early early departure from Palmy put me at the marina in Lower Hutt by the 6:45am meeting time, and after a briefing from the skipper we were gliding out of the marina, down the harbour and out into the strait. A pod or two of common dolphins accompanied us for part of the way, riding beneath the bow of the boat.

Out in the strait it was sunny and still - a rare treat! We chummed along the Nicholson Canyon, attracting a raft of albatross that had been following a trawler.

Collectively we saw a total of 27 species during our six hours out on the water, including five species of albatross (white-capped being the most numerous), five species of petrel, and four species of shearwater. I missed the chance to see my first southern royal albatross and common diving-petrel, but saw and photographed my first Westland petrel and flesh-footed shearwater. Another highlight was seeing a sperm whale diving; some in the group saw it surface again later too.



White-capped Mollymawk, Photo by Chris Tuffley

On my way home I stopped at Pāuatahanui and Waikanae Estuary. At Pāuatahanui I was hoping for mātātā / fernbirds - a couple seen, a couple more heard, none photographed! - and at Waikanae I watched the resident kōtuku / white heron catch and eat an eel. The light was lovely, and it was an excellent end to a great day of birding.



Kōtuku / white heron, Photo by Chris Tuffley

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 14th May 2025

Share bird places and experiences

Come and share your favourite bird spot and one or two of your extraordinary, funny or exciting bird experiences. Or come along to hear about others favourite bird places and experiences.

Bring a memory stick with a map or a couple of photos of the place or birds (if you have some) and show them on the screen while you tell us about the place or experience. If you do not have photos do not worry, you can just talk. Your talk should not take more than five minutes.

The meeting starts with notices and recent bird sightings and finishes with coffee and tea.



Australasian Bittern by Niel Hagarty

Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

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

Upcoming trips

Saturday 10th May Pauatahanui inlet/wetland near Plimmerton on Cornell Lab (eBird) GLOBAL BIG DAY.

We will carpool from Palmerston North leaving 8am or meet at the inlet around 9:30am. On the way back we might visit some of the estuaries. Plan for a day out. We will be back at Palmerston North around 5pm. **If you are interested in coming on this trip, please contact me on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com or text me on 0273546010 latest the 6th May.**

What is Global Big day?

Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on 10 May, help celebrate [World Migratory Bird Day](#), and share the birds you find with eBird.

Last year, Global Big Day collected more data about birds on a single day than ever before. More than 63,000 people gathered observations on 156,000 checklists, setting [new world records](#) for a single day of birding. [Read more](#)

Winter wader census 14-15th June

This year winter wader census takes place on Saturday 14 or Sunday 15th June which is the weekend where the tides are most favourable. We go out in small groups to the estuaries and count waders. **Are you interested in contributing - please contact Phil Battley on p.battley@massey.ac.nz**

Saturday 13th or Sunday 14th September

Kirsten Olsen will organize this trip. Where we go will be announced later. If you have places you would like to go, please contact Kirsten on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com

Westland petrel by Chris Tuffley



Links to other regions' newsletters and other material

South Auckland Newsletter – March 2025:

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

Wellington Newsletter– March 2025:

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

Nelson Newsletter – April 2025:

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

South Auckland Newsletter – April 2025:

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

Waikato Newsletter – May/June 2025:

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

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>

Material from the Online Moulting Workshop 5 February 2025

The material is available from Birds NZ's website. Follow the link below:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/schemes/moult-recording-scheme/online-moult-workshop/>

Free Book for New Members can be found at:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/free-book-for-new-members/>



Northern Royal Albatross by Chris Tuffley

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 (AOC)

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/>

AOC 2025 – Call for Abstracts

Abstract Submissions are now open and close 13 June.

Registration opens 5 May. For more details visit <https://aoc.org.au/>

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

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."



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 June 2025 issue: 26 May 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

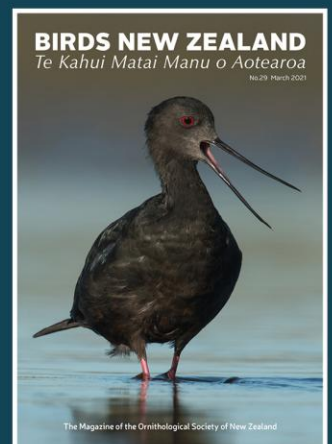
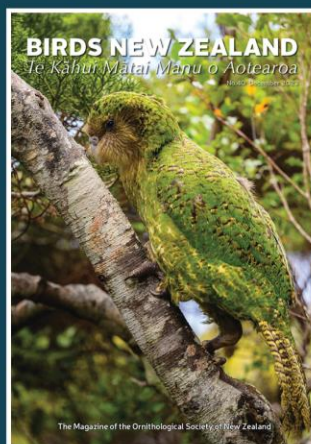
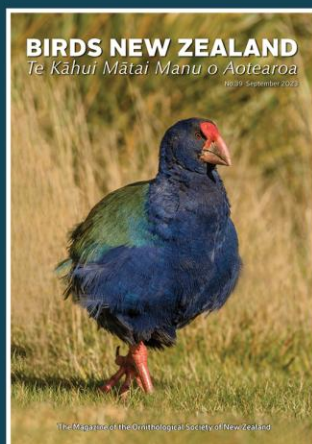
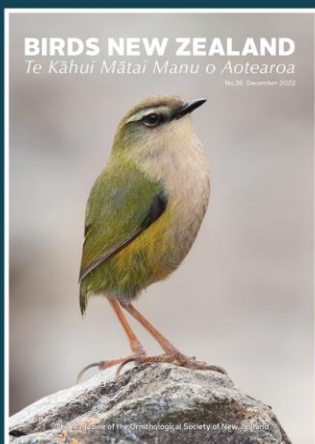
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

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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<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/donate/>

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