



BIRDS
NEW ZEALAND
Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter June 2025

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Shore plover by Neill Hagarty

From the Regional Representative

We have had an active May with two field trips and one monthly meeting. I have written three small reports from these three events later in this newsletter.

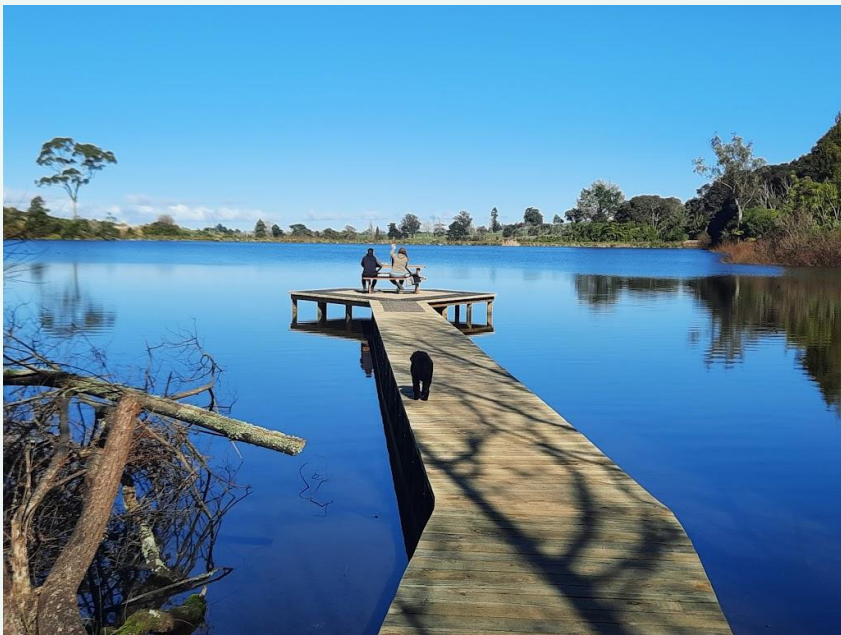
I think the new format we tried at the last meeting was a success even though fewer people turned up than the 25 we have had the last couple of meetings. We were 11 and there was lots of talk and sharing after the presentation of bird experiences and places.

I am attending the Regional representative's meeting in Auckland on Friday the 30th May before the Birds NZ annual conference. That is why I am sending this newsletter out late Wednesday 28 May. I am looking forward to catching up with representatives from other regions. They might have some good ideas about how I can get submissions for the newsletter and speakers for our monthly meetings.

The winter wader count is coming up on the weekend 14th - 15th June. Please contact Phil Battley if you are interested in participating. His email is: p.battley@massey.ac.nz.

I will be in Europe from the 18th June to the 22nd August, so I will not be able to run the July and August meetings. I am sure that someone will step in. I will still organize speakers and write the newsletters. The news that I can put in the newsletters will depend on the contributions you make. Please send me photos and notes about your bird adventures and sightings or other bird news for the next newsletter on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com. **Deadline for the July issue is 25th June 2025.**

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.



Tutaenui Reservoir.
Photo by Neill Haggarty

Last meeting 14th May 2025

At our last meeting we tried out a new format where members could share their bird places and experiences by bringing along photos or sound recordings. 11 members attended the meeting.

Kirsten Olsen gave some notices at the start and gave a brief account of the two field trips organized in May (see later in this newsletter). Kirsten Olsen, Stephen Legg, Neill Haggarty and Chris Tuffley brought along photos, videos and sound recordings.

Kirsten described how the New Zealand Bird Atlas made her and Stephen discover the ponds at Hawkstone Golf course near Marton as a bird hotspot. They visited the site at least 7 times during the Atlas survey. Between 20 and 33 species were seen every time.

Stephen showed a video of Pohangina wetland and one he made from a wader census at Kuku Beach.

Chris showed some of his amazing Photos from his pelagic trip on Cook's Strait with the Birds NZ Wellington Branch. He also shared sound recordings from three days camping at lake Rotokara. He had sound recording of Saddleback, Stitch bird. Fernbird, North Island Robin amongst others.

Neill showed some fantastic bird photos and shared his amazing close encounter with Australasian Bittern and Little Egret at Foxton Beach and with a Shore plover at Plimmerton.

There was lots of discussion and chatting and sharing of experiences after the talks over a cup of tea and a biscuit.



Little Egret by Neill Haggarty

Trip to Pohangina and Luttrell's Wetlands 4th May 2025

by Kirsten Olsen

Neill Haggarty and Kirsten Olsen organised this trip. Five members and one other attended the trip. We met at Pohangina wetland at 9am.

It was great to have two new members on the trip. At Pohangina wetland we saw 22 species. We had expected to see several water fowls, but there were not that many. We saw Canada geese, Mallards, Paradise Shelducks and Dabchicks. We also saw one Little Shag, a White-faced Heron and some Spur-winged Plovers. A full checklist can be accessed via this link: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S232729638> . It was a beautiful sunny morning so we walked slowly around the wetland.

We went to Luttrell's wetland at 10:30 am. It is located just opposite of Pohangina Wetland. We were met by Tim Luttrell and his wife. Tim showed us around the beautiful wetlands. There were more waterfowl in his wetland. We saw Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, Mallard, Grey Teal and New Zealand Scaup. We saw a total of 18 species here. A full checklist can be found at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S232730237> . In total we saw 28 species. An eBird trip report can be accessed via this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/369463?view=checklists>

After we had walked around the wetland we came back to the house and we had a cup of coffee or tea. We also had our lunches here. Tim has a brilliant museum that he showed us after lunch. There are many different farm implements, a large sea shell collection. There are also some pest traps. Tim Luttrell is the person that invented the Tim-trap. He has spent many years on pest control. It cost NZ\$ 6 to get access the Museum. It was a really lovely trip.



Luttrell's wetland, Photo by Kirsten Olsen

Birds NZ Manawatū's Global Big Day trip 10th May 2025

by Kirsten Olsen. Photos by Neill Haggarty.

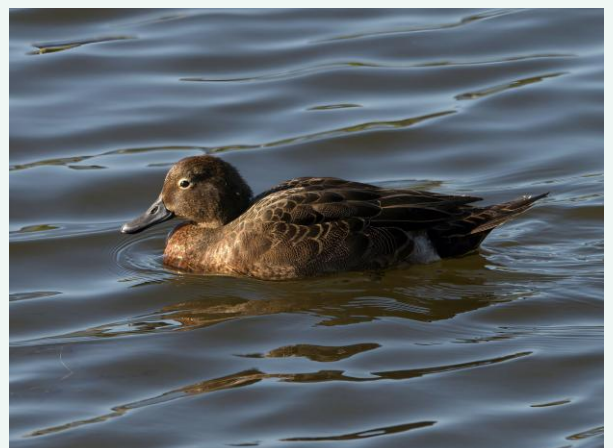
Four members (Stephen, Neill, Marta and Kirsten) from Birds NZ Manawatū set out from Palmerston North at 8am and were at Pauatahanui at 9:30 where we met Jan from Birds NZ Wellington. We met near the public toilets and walked first to the Hide overlooking the inlet. We heard and saw New Zealand Fernbird several times on the way to the hide. Neill really wanted to get a nice photo of a Fernbird but they did not like the look of the camera. We saw and heard 25 species on the way to and at the hide. We did not hear or see any crakes or rail.



We then made our way to the hide at the South Basin. Again, we heard New Zealand Fernbird. Four of us had been in the hide for a while enjoying the Spoonbills, Grey teals and stilts when Neill came in with a big smile on his face and a brilliant photo on his camera of a Fernbird. Still, we did not hear crakes or Rail. We crossed the road and went all the way to the end of the path where we found a bench in the sun. A nice place to eat our lunches.

We went back to the cars and drove to Waikanae. We spend a long time around the Waimanu Lagoon. We saw White Herron, Brown Teal, Royal Spoonbills, New Zealand Dabchick and several other waterfowl. We also saw the four most common shag species. We went out along Waikanae River to the beach to see if we could get more species on our Big Day list. We added Caspian Tern, Variable Oystercatcher and Red-billed Gull to the list. It was a brilliant sunny day, nice birds and people. I really enjoyed it.

We saw or heard 42 species on the trip. To see the full list of birds we saw, you can go the eBird trip report: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/364206> .



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 updates on regional bird sighting 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.

At the next meeting **11th June 2025, Nikki McArthur** will talk about:

A summer census of shorebirds on the braided rivers and coastline of the Manawatū / Whanganui region

Between November 2024 and January 2025 members of Birds New Zealand carried out the first ever summer census of shorebirds breeding along the rivers and coastline of the Manawatū-Whanganui region. Over several weeks, fieldworkers traversed 491 km of the region's rivers and 160 km of the Manawatū / Whanganui coastline by foot and by kayak, systematically counting all of the shorebirds that were found. In this talk, Nikki will share some of the key results from these surveys and will recount some of the highlights and lowlights of carrying out regional-scale census surveys. These Manawatū-Whanganui surveys form the last piece of the puzzle in a series of regional shorebird census surveys that have been carried out in the lower North Island in recent years. Nikki will share what we now know about how the local abundance and distribution of shorebirds in the Manawatū/Whanganui region compares to those in Hawke's Bay and Wellington/Wairarapa.



Nikki McArthur is an independent ecologist and long-time Birds New Zealand member currently based in Blenheim. Nikki has worked as an ecologist for over 20 years, specialising in designing, planning and carrying out bird monitoring and research projects. Over the past 10 years, Nikki has focused on monitoring bird populations at sites in the lower North Island, spending countless hours traipsing along the coastline and rivers of the Wairarapa, Hawke's Bay and the Manawatū.

Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

9th July, 13th August, 10th September, 8th October, 12 November

Upcoming trips

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 will 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



Birds gathering at Manawatu river Estuary, Photo by Nell Haggarty

Links to other regions' newsletters and other material

Otago newsletter – April 2025: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/otago-newsletter/>

Notices

2025 BirdsNZ Conference & AGM

The 2025 NZ Bird Conference & Annual General Meeting will be held in Auckland on 31 May-2 June. 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 trips.

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@birdsanz.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 July 2025 issue: 25 June 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

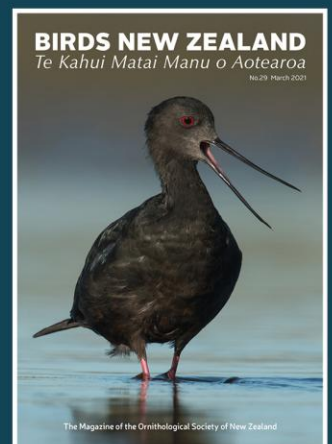
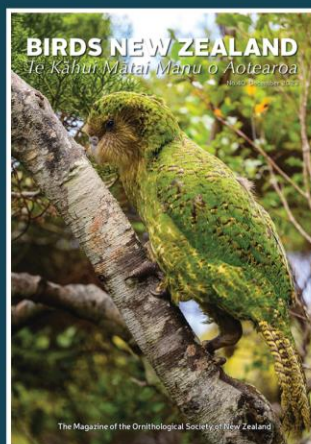
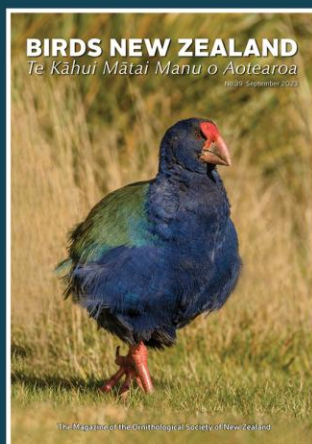
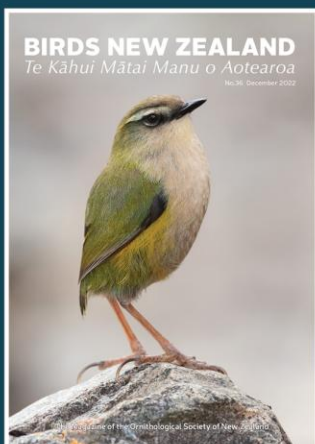
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

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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