



One swallow welcoming another at the Styx Mill Reserve. Photo taken by Peter Davies on a recent BirdsNZ 'Ramble'.

For your diary in August . . .

Birding Ramble to Coopers Lagoon & environs. Wednesday, August 13. Meet at Leeston at 10 am and carpool or self drive from there. Can also hook up with Janet in Rolleston. Contact Janet Burton 022-038-8668.

Brooklands Beach Patrol, Saturday, August 16. Birding the wetlands of Brookland lagoon, and then patrolling back down the beach for dead birds. Contact Anita Spencer at birds.canterbury@birdsNZ.org.nz

Birding Ramble to Christchurch Adventure Park, Thursday 21st August. Meet at Worsley's Reserve (Worsley's Rd, off Cashmere Road) at 10:00. Contact Janet Burton on 022-038-8668 if you would like to attend.

Monthly Meeting: August 25, 7:30 pm - Nick Allen talking about his recent trip to Portugal and the birds he saw there. Nick is an incredibly proficient birder, so he will no doubt have photos and stories of all sorts of interesting sightings. Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Please see Anita's monthly email for the Teams link if you are unable to attend in person.



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

We've been having some great speakers at our monthly meetings. In July Mark Fraser gave a fascinating talk on the history of Canterbury museum and some of the treasures it holds. We were shown a photo of the intact huia nest that is the only one in existence, as well as some of the bird specimens with non-typical plumage, such as Kaka. At our June meeting Georgie Archibald shared some absolutely stunning shots from South Georgia and spoke not just about the special wildlife there but the details of the Antarctic Heritage Trust trip for young aspiring explorers. Many thanks to all of the speakers this year for sharing their knowledge and photos with us. We've started having short bird tutorials before our main talk to go over some species that can be tricky to identify. Phil Crutchley ran us through the differences between Red-billed and Black-billed Gulls in July, and for our August meeting David Thomas will be giving tips on identifying albatrosses. If you aren't

able to come along in person, then consider joining us online.

There have been a few sightings of unusual or exciting birds in the last couple of months. A report of a kaka at New Brighton turned out to be a false alarm: it was a report for Brighton in Dunedin. At a banding session at Victoria Park a banded Silvereye was caught that turned out to be a recapture from a banding session 57 days previously at the Styx Field Centre. A Pacific Heron continues to appear and disappear in the Karamea area. The South Island Wildlife Hospital had a Light Mantled Sooty Albatross found on New Brighton Beach and a bittern from the West Coast.

Ngā mihi nui

Anita Spencer

Canterbury and West Coast Regional Representative

Indoor Meetings

Evening Meetings for members will take place at 7:30 pm on the last Monday of the month (or, if that is a public holiday, on the Monday before or after).



Where?

Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn.
Plenty of parking available.

Upcoming meeting dates: 25 August, 29 September, 20 October (a week early because of Labour Day) and 24 November. See page 3 for details of speakers.

If you know of anyone who would be willing to present at a meeting, or if you would be willing to do so yourself, please let Anita know at birds.canterbury@birdsNZ.org.nz

Events and Outings in September and Beyond

(see page one for August activities)

September

5th, 6th & 7th (Fri – Sat) - The 2025 Great Matuku-Hurepo Muster.

Also on 3-5 Oct & 7-9 Nov. Last year was a huge success with 223 individual booming male bittern counted. For more information see <http://www.lovebittern.com/>.

13th (Sat) – Visit to Travis Wetland. So close to Christchurch, and so great for birding! Contact Anita (birds.canterbury@birdsanz.org.nz)

29th (Mon) – Monthly meeting with Andrew Crossland & Phil Crutchley speaking about their birding adventure in Bali & Flores. 7:30 pm, DOC office, 31 Nga Mahi Rd.



Photo by ou.wildlife

October

3rd, 4th & 5th (Fri – Sat) - The 2025 Great Matuku-Hurepo Muster. Also on 7-9 November. Last year was a huge success with 223 individual booming male bittern counted. For more information see <http://www.lovebittern.com/>.

11th (Sat) – The ebird ‘October Big Day’. A worldwide event organised by the Cornell laboratory of Ornithology. Go to <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2025> for information and to register.

20th (Mon) – Monthly meeting with David Melville talking on wader counts and their importance in bird conservation. 7:30 pm, DOC office, 31 Nga Mahi Rd.

25th (Sat) – Glentui Reserve Nature Loop. A delightful day-outing to the foothill forests. Contact Anita Spencer at birds.canterbury@birdsanz.org.nz.

November

7th, 8th & 9th (Fri – Sat) - The 2025 Great Matuku-Hurepo Muster. The last of three weekend counts in 2025. For more information or to become involved see <http://www.lovebittern.com/>.

23rd (Sunday) - Canterbury Wader Count. This is a thrice-yearly survey which contributes valuable data to the national and international understanding of wader populations. Contact Anita at birds.canterbury@birdsanz.org.nz.

24th (Mon) – Monthly meeting. A year-end celebration with kai, photos, body parts (birds’, that is) and general enjoyment. 7:30 pm, DOC office, 31 Nga Mahi Rd.

And looking further ahead . . .

16th, 17th & 18th January (Fri – Sun) - Trip to Pūkoro Shorebird Centre. Meet in Auckland and proceed to Miranda on Friday, leave Monday. Option to visit TiriTiri Matangi before Pūkoro on the 15th. Contact Anita Spencer (birds.canterbury@birdsanz.org.nz) for information.



Photo by Andrew Eppedio



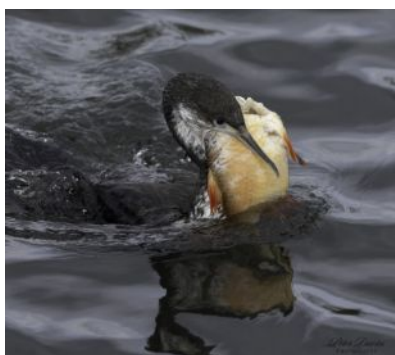
Photo courtesy of The Pukoro Shorebird Centre

Birding Rambles with Bev, Sharon and Janet

BirdsNZ stalwarts Bev Alexander, Sharon Lake and Janet Burton conduct monthly mid-week 'rambles' to places of birding interest around Christchurch. For those able to get out on a weekday morning, these usually half-day outings are a treat not to miss. Bev and the others always plan the itinerary with care, and they freely share their birding expertise with one and all.

Upcoming Rambles: **Wed, 13 August**, to Coopers Lagoon, & **Thurs, 21 August**, to the Christchurch Adventure Park. Contact Janet Burton on 022-038-8668 if you would like to attend either outing.

And watch Anita's monthly emails for dates, times and destinations of other Rambles, or contact Anita directly at birds.canterbury@birdsnz.org.nz to enquire.



*Kaiapoi Lakes, Wednesday, 23 April.
Pied Shag with a bit more than it can
swallow. Photo by Peter Davies*

*Here's
a look at some
recent
Rambles*



*Styx Mill Reserve, Thursday, 15 May.
Grey Teal. Photo by Peter Davies.*



*Styx Mill Reserve, Thursday, 15 May. Bev and
others on the lookout for birds. Photo by Peter
Davies.*



*Avon-Heathcote Estuary, 18 June. A stunning day to be
out birding!*



*Pegasus Wetlands, Tuesday, 29 July. New Zealand Scaup.
Photo by Jesse Kemp.*

Reports from Afield

A roundup of recent BirdsNZ activities, outings and fieldwork

2025 Birds New Zealand Annual Conference

This year marked the 85th conference of Birds NZ, and the event was held in Auckland. This was the second time I have attended, and I went up on Friday for the Regional Representative's meeting, which is a good chance to catch up with other RR's and discuss how the branches are faring. Some are holding steady but are concerned about not recruiting enough younger people, while others are enjoying significant growth: membership at the Hamilton branch has increased by 23% in the last year.

The sessions on Days 1 and 2 were of a high standard. There were plenty of talks on seabirds (black petrel, titi, kororā), which I enjoyed; but there was also a good mix of other presentations—some species-specific (hihi, kakapo) and others on issues ranging from diseases to nomenclature. In one of these I was interested to learn that after bird flu decimated bird populations in Scotland, the eyes of many of the surviving gannets changed from blue to black. The detection of one such individual in NZ inspired a rapid study of the Farewell Spit population so that the change could be investigated. The black eyes were proved to result from glaucoma, which can result from trauma and other illnesses as well, not just from the flu. Black-eyed gannets in Scotland seemed still to be in good condition and to be breeding successfully, so the long-term effect of the condition is not yet known.

One particularly memorable talk was given by Michelle Bradshaw from the DOC banding office, who focused on the Falcon database and highlighted 34,698 entries associated (supervising or banding) with our very own legend Peter Reese. Michelle challenged the attendees to emulate Peter and invest in mentoring trainees.

For Tuesday's field trip I went on the pelagic outing near Hauturu / Little Barrier Island. Sea conditions were pretty good, and no more than 10 minutes after stopping and chumming, a NZ storm petrel flew in and danced for a few minutes on the water around us. This was a bird most of us had been hoping to see, and we weren't disappointed. We also had a brown skua come and circle above us. The rest of the pelagic was spent watching birds at a distance, as none seemed interested in landing on the water or coming to the boat. There were many common diving petrels, several little shearwater, a couple of fairy prions and quite a few gannets flying and resting on the water.

It was great to see several other West Coast and Canterbury members at the conference. Next year the Otago branch will be hosting, and as it is to be in Wanaka it should be easier for Canterbury and West Coast members to get too. I highly recommend attending.

--Anita Spencer

Flagged Tōrea / South Island Pied Oystercatchers

On Saturday, 5th July, Timothy Horne, Sharon Heatherbell and I took a trip to the Avon-Heathcote Estuary to look for flagged South Island Pied Oystercatchers (SIPO). Manaaki Whenua, Birds NZ, the Department of Conservation, Otago Regional Council and the Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust have teamed up to research threatened species that migrate within New Zealand, and tōrea /SIPO has been selected as one of the study species.

Birds have been caught at sites around the country, and a flag has been attached to each bird's tibia (upper part of the leg). Each area's birds have been marked with a distinguishing colour, with Canterbury birds marked in blue. Each flag also shows a unique 3-character alpha-numeric combination for individual identification.

We went to the estuary edge, where Tim and I scanned with scopes and managed to work out two of the combinations (on blue flags) as the birds walked around. All too often the flag seemed to be either underwater or facing the wrong side, but we persevered. Sharon had much better luck with her camera, being able to take photos and then zoom in on the flags to read the numbers and letters. She waded out to a further island—no mean feat in the middle of winter—and recorded an additional 6 combinations, also on blue flags.

I duly sent our observation results off to David Melville and Rob Schuckard, who replied that the birds were all 1-2 years of age and had been banded at the Avon-Heathcote estuary in 2023 and 2024. Rob and David noted it was great to have these records before the birds moved off the breeding grounds, and stressed that further surveys are still of interest. They have also had a few of their yellow-flagged Nelson/Tasman birds found in Christchurch, so we should continue to keep an eye out for them.

I'd encourage members to visit their local estuaries and scan the flocks of SIPO for marked birds. The more people on the lookout for the flags, the more information the researchers will get to fill in the gaps in our knowledge about New Zealand's bird migrations.

--Anita Spencer



Photo by Sharon Heatherbell



Photo by Sharon Heatherbell

Kaikoura Pelagic Trip

On 19 July, a sunny Canterbury Saturday, I was delighted to get the chance to drive up to Kaikoura and go on a 4-hour pelagic cruise offered by the Nelson-Tasman branch of Birds NZ. This was my first ever open-ocean trip, so I was beyond desperate to get out on the water and start birding. We started our cruise by heading south to the Kaikoura canyons, where a fishing vessel was chucking out its offcuts. This had attracted a large selection of seabirds, which included the following:

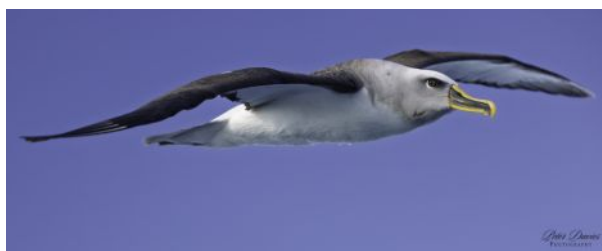


- 1 Northern Royal Albatross
- 5 Southern Royal Albatross
- 3 Gibson's Albatross
- 6 White-capped Mollymawk
- 6 Black-browed Mollymawk
- 8 Salvin's Mollymawk
- 1 Buller's Mollymawk
- 12 Northern Giant Petrel
- 50 Cape Petrel



This was a nice yield to be sure, but we were just getting started. After a bit of extra chumming, we continued south along the Conway Trough (a sea valley that feeds into the Kaikoura canyons). Along the way, we became aware of a number of small seabirds darting by the boat, dipping in and out of the swell troughs. They could only be fairy prions. We saw over 10 in total during the trip and were lucky enough to have some land on the water for us to photograph. The prions were accompanied by a few of the much larger Westland Petrels, which stood out with their nearly jet-black brownish body and bright white bills. As we reached one of our stopping points, one over a rise or mound in the seabed, we came across a large fishing vessel that had obviously been throwing out offcuts for a while as there was a gaggle of over 200 mollymawks, albatrosses and petrels fighting for the best scraps and creating a non-stop cacophony of shrieks and squawks. This was by far our most exciting and “alive” encounter of the day, and by my reckoning a conservative tally of species would be as follows:

- 9 Fairy Prion
- 4 Westland Petrel
- 1 Sooty Shearwater
- 12 Salvin's Mollymawk (more than I expected to see around this time!)
- 70 Cape Petrel
- 30 Northern Giant Petrel
- 20 Black-browed Mollymawk
- 16 White-capped Mollymawk
- 12 Buller's Mollymawk
- 16 Gibson's Albatross
- 3 Southern Royal Albatross
- 1 Northern Royal Albatross



Buller's Mollymawk/Albatross. Photo by Peter Davies.



We found it hard to move on from here, as the action was exhilarating and the picture-taking opportunities endless. Eventually, however, we got round to heading back to shore and on the return leg were delighted to repeatedly come across small flocks of Black-fronted Tern and Fluttering Shearwater. Our final stop was at Panau Island, which to me and my friend sounded at first like a complete waste of time. These doubts vanished, however, when we saw a Pacific Reef Heron, which capped off the day perfectly. This excellent trip, made possible by Birds NZ, was full of highlights and planned so well that I was comfortably back in Christchurch for dinner.

--Judah Gray (photos by the author unless attributed otherwise)

Ashburton Lakes Mid-winter Bird Count



The Ashburton Lakes mid-winter bird count is an annual event that has been going for over 30 years, making it one of New Zealand's longest-running bird survey datasets. The event usually takes place in July and involves counting wetland birds across 12 lakes in the Ashburton Lakes district. The work is supervised by local experts and carried out by interested members of the public. The information collected contributes to a valuable long-term dataset, allowing for tracking bird population trends and understanding the health of the wetland ecosystems in the area. The results of this year's count are in the following table:

	ASHBURTON LAKES MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT																		
	Heron 1	Heron 2	Heron 3	Heron 4	Heron totals	Emily	E Maori	W Maori	Trinity	Denny	Emma	Roundabout	Spider/ Don	Nursery	Camp	Clearwater	Lambies	Barrosa paddocks	Totals
20/7/2025						90	10	25						70					
% Ice																			
Crested grebe	6	1	2	2	11						1				2	4			18
Black shag	1	2	1	2	6						2				2	4			14
Little shag	18	25	3		46	1					48				2	11			108
Pied shag					0														0
White-faced heron	2	1			3	1			1				2						7
Bittern					0														0
White heron					0														0
Black swan	35	7	9	25	76	2	10	43	70	2	145	71	2			3	2	64	490
Canada goose	170			22	192	12	80	218	50	77	57	29							715
Paradise shelduck	57	12	34	29	132		6	7	2	6	3	6					2	7	171
Mallard	112	44	38	22	216	25	41	108	75	28	142	12		17	34				698
Mallard/grey hybrid					0														0
Grey duck					0														0
NZ shoveler			1		1	1	2	12	22	1	20	17				2			77
Duck spp					0														0
NZ scaup	327	198		236	761					49	15	292			15	753			1885
Grey teal	364	25		6	395				2			4							401
Pukeko			8		8			1											9
Australasian Coot		347			347						1								348
Pied oystercatcher			11		11												2		13
Pied stilt					0											0			0
Spur-winger plover		2	14		16			2											18
Banded dotterel					0														0
Black-fronted tern		2			2														2
White-fronted tern					0														0
Black-billed gull					0														0
Black-backed gull			1	1	2			2		2	3					4			13
Falcon					0														0
Harrier		2	1		3	3	1	2	2			1			1	2			12
Kingfisher					0														0
Welcome Swallow					0			2											2
NZ pipit					0														0
Totals	1092	668	123	345	2228	41	140	397	224	165	437	432	4	0	39	817	6	71	5001

2025 Canterbury Wader Count

This year's Canterbury wader count was a rousing success, with 41 eager bird enthusiasts participating over several days to count the region's shorebirds. The results constitute an invaluable source of information for birders and policy makers alike. The count is summarised below (sites and species with no birds recorded have been omitted for reasons of space):

CANTERBURY WADER COUNT June 2025	Waipara RM	Ashley/Sweet Ck Est	Taranaki Creek	Waimakariri Bridges	Brickends Lgn/Kaipara SP	Travis Wetland	Avon-Heathcote Est	Lyttelton Harbour	Puaka	Port Levy	Pigeon Bay	Quail Bay	Le Bors Bay	Albion Harbour	Lake Forsyth	Lake Ellesmere	Coopers Lgn	384 Unwoods Rd	Raikaia RM	Ashburton RM	Spider Lgn	Ophi RM/Milford Lgn	Washdyke Lagoon	Saltwater Creek	Otipua Wetlands	Smithfield Rockpools	Normanby Lgn	Kiwa Inanga	TOTAL
Austral. Crested Grebe																1													1
Mute Swan																3	8												11
Spotted Shag		350														0													350
Black Shag																11	2											7	20
Pied Shag	14	37														55	2		16										124
Little Pied Shag		8														3	10		1									7	29
Little Black Shag																2								2					4
Australasian Bittern																1													1
White-faced Heron		2	14													151	1											24	192
White Heron							2									3												1	6
Little Egret			1			1									1	0						1							4
Cattle Egret			3													12												7	22
Royal Spoonbill				6		16				2				3		41						2		3					73
Pied Oystercatcher	10	91	7	31	18	2083	114	5	22	10	53	3	131		54					4	32	3	12				30	2713	
Variable Oystercatcher	4	15		2		185	5	16	10	6	5	9	36	2	3				2	2	1	2	18			28		351	
Hybrid Oystercatcher		19														0		3											22
Black Stilt																1												1	2
Pied Stilt		3	97	113	25	50	33			4		2	8	7	60	1824	30		18		7	57	128		8		14	288	2776
Hybrid Stilt			3													5												1	9
Banded Dotterel		1		50	1	55	5									688		34			2	18			1		22	877	
Black-fronted Dotterel		1														4						2	10	12	14				43
Wrybill						1										6													7
Spur-winged Plover	12	3	6	20	38	17	79	34		18	6	23	6	24	44	568	18	4	15	2	19	3	5		6		1	240	1211
Turnstone																0		6											6
Red-necked Stint																4													4
Bar-tailed Godwit		4		6		260										0													270
Red billed gull	21	11	19													0			1										52
Black-billed Gull	18	35	125													13	6	2730	410		9	3					105	3454	
Southern BB Gull	6	97	8													361	6	9	70								150	707	
Black-fronted Tern	3	6		11	3											3	4	48	10		5	16							109
White-fronted Tern	2	26					4									0													32
Caspian Tern	2	6		1	2		2					3		3	3	10			7									2	41
Site totals	92	715	283	32	251	61	2738	191	21	56	22	86	26	204	110	8715	87	2834	550	8	75	107	173	17	29	28	15	885	13523
Wader site totals	26	137	113	20	240	61	2713	191	21	54	22	83	26	198	106	3157	48	47	35	8	61	85	173	12	29	28	15	582	8291
% of total count	0.3	1.7	1.4	0.2	2.9	0.7	32.8	2.3	0.3	0.7	0.3	1.0	0.3	2.4	1.3	38.2	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.7	1.0	2.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.2	7.0	100.3
# wader species at site	3	8	4	1	6	4	7	5	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	10	2	4	3	3	5	6	5	1	4	1	2	6	13
Swamp harrier		5	5														3	1	7				1					12	88

Rare Kārearea Sightings at Hinewai



Kārearea sitting on barrier at Hinewai Reserve, April 2022- photo by Ash Lennon

While conducting the 2nd of the biannual bird surveys at Hinewai Reserve this winter, observers had some extraordinary sightings of kārearea/NZ falcon. While Hinewai is fortunate to have regular visits from kārearea, to see them during the bird surveys is particularly special.

The first of the sightings during this winter's survey occurred in the old-growth beech forest when we saw a falcon fly in and land in a distant tree. The bird did short flights and 'jumps' from one perch to another while the other forest birds sent out a cacophony of panicked alarm calls. Then, in one small flourishing flight, the kārearea appeared to catch a small bird. We were unable to see the species of the prey but watched as the falcon butchered and ate it in the fork of a red beech branch.

As if this sighting wasn't enough, we had another view of a kārearea on the last bird plot for the day when, a few minutes before the 20-minute observation period expired, one of the team spotted a kārearea sitting at the top of tōtara tree. I don't know whether this was the same individual we had seen earlier, but I'm reasonably sure I had seen it on the reserve before, as this particular bird has a very distinctive feature.



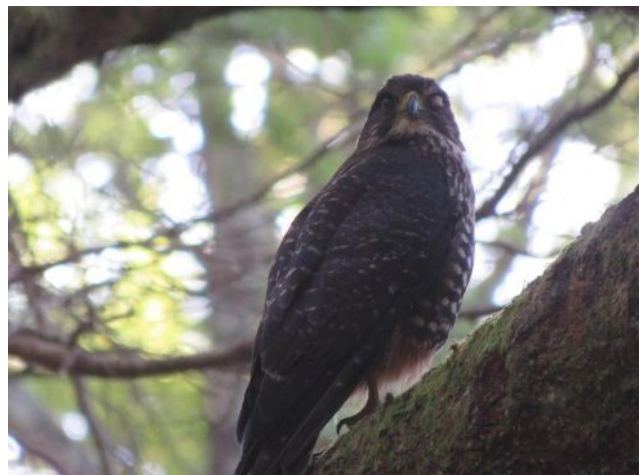
Kārearea butchering and feeding on bird caught during bird survey, July 2025- photo by Ash Lennon

In January 2024, while walking through the forest, I happened upon a falcon sitting on a large branch just a few metres above my head. As I looked at the bird, it looked back,

seemingly curious, but did so only through one eye. Its left eye was completely closed and stayed that way during our entire interaction. I left wondering how a predator so reliant on keen eyesight could manage with such a disability. But alas, here we were a year and a half later looking at what appeared to be the same bird.



Kārearea atop tōtara tree during bird survey, July 2025. Note closed left eye - photo by Ash Lennon



Kārearea with closed left eye seen in beech forest, January 2024 - photo by Ash Lennon

From our observations of the bird atop the tōtara tree in this winter's bird survey it appears that it is sometimes able to open the left eye, but the 'default' position is for it to be closed. I am aware that birds will sometimes 'rest' with one eye closed, but that didn't seem to be the case for this bird. I also know of records of various diseases among raptors wherein a closed eye is a common symptom, but I am not sure of that either in this case. I would therefore greatly appreciate hearing from any ornithologists or raptor specialists who may be able to shed light on this particular individual's affliction.

The winter survey was completed with an impressive list of bird species and interesting observations, but none quite as exhilarating as the kārearea's visits.

--Ashley Lennon

Members' News

Lucy Howell wins Marj Davis Scholarship

Birds New Zealand is proud to announce that Lucy Howell, a doctoral candidate at the School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury, has been awarded a \$1500 Marj Davis Scholarship from for her research on Kororā / Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*). The project, titled 'Optimising non-invasive faecal sampling for assessing kororā (*Eudyptula minor*) health: Enhancing long-term management strategies at the Pōhatu/Flea Bay Colony,

Horomaka, Banks Peninsula' is being conducted under the supervision of Professor Elissa Cameron, Chair of the Department of Biology, and in collaboration with Tammy Steeves, also of the department. Work is currently underway, so we wish Lucy well with her ongoing research and look forward to a report of her findings.

Satori Mayell - ecology-based wildlife artist

We welcome new member Satori Mayell, who in addition to being a keen birder is also an accomplished artist, specialising in sculptures, paintings, and mixed-media art that explore the diverse native species and conservation within New Zealand and our Subantarctic Islands.



Born and raised in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Satori has worked in a variety of outdoor roles centred around conservation and education and uses her art to capture experiences of the wildlife and vibrant native ecosystems she spends time in. Here is what she says of herself and her work:

I have always held a deep love and reverence for the natural world, having grown up with Steve Irwin, David Attenborough, and many other passionate naturalists as my childhood heroes. I viewed our native birds especially as almost mythic creatures, revered in Māori legend and saved from the brink of extinction through selfless efforts in conservation biology that sometimes rivaled the feats I read about in fantasy books.

Art and creativity has been as much a constant in my life as my love of birds. For as long as I can remember I have been sculpting tiny creatures out of polymer clay and playing with every creative medium I came across. During the first Covid lockdown I tried needlefelting and immediately took to it as a sculpting technique. Working with wool meant I could make large and detailed sculptures that were delicate but not fragile, and I quickly found ways to incorporate my other skills to make mixed-media pieces with a special style to them.



Having studied sustainability and outdoor education, and having a career that spans a variety of guiding and conservation roles, I feel it's important that my art

not only captures my love of our taonga species but also inspires and educates people about them and the many threats they face. I especially love focussing on species that are not often seen or are underappreciated by the public at large, and I try wherever possible to highlight local groups and activities that people can support to foster their own relationship with the land around them.



Since starting needlefelting I have done two solo exhibitions and joined in on several group and fundraising exhibitions. My first solo event was here in Christchurch and featured many local forest and wetland species. My second was hosted by the Ōwaka Museum in the Catlins and celebrated the incredible diversity of New Zealand's forest and marine life, while at the same time calling for better protection of them.

This past January I was incredibly humbled to be allowed to visit the Subantarctic Islands with Heritage Expeditions. The trip was one of the most incredible experiences of my life, and I am working on many pieces that convey my awe of these remote islands and my gratitude for the efforts being made to restore Auckland Island in particular.



At the moment I am leasing desk space at the Christchurch Envirohub to work on commissions and set up my own art website. I also continue to do what I can to promote awareness and protection of the brilliant and irreplaceable ecosystem that is the Denniston Plateau.

I am incredibly excited to be a member of Birds NZ and am looking forward to attending field trips with other passionate individuals and learning more about our birds and how to care for them.

You can find more of Satori's art on her facebook page, Satori Mayell Art, or on instagram @Finding_Familiars.

Obituary - Mark McFadden



Jan Walker reports the passing of Mark McFadden, who died at 68 years of age on 29 November 2024 in Christchurch after a long battle with cancer.

Mark was the owner of printing company Toltec Print and led the firm's design team. Some may recall that Toltech did the design and print work on Nick Allen's 'Where to Watch Birds in Canterbury', a very popular guidebook published by the Canterbury branch of OSNZ in 2012.

Mark lived in Rangiora and often went birding with neighbour Tony Crocker, who once edited the *OSNZ News*, a *BirdsNZ* forerunner. Tony writes the following of his friend:

One of the highlights of our birding friendship was participating in a North West Australia expedition based in Broome in 2006. As part of a large team under the tough command of Clive Minton we worked like galley slaves, banding and processing thousands of waders in 40+C heat and sweltering at night in tents in 30+C. We loved every minute of it.

Mark was a better birder than he would generally admit. On a recent spin around the upper South Island we stopped at Westport. 'What's that?', Mark said, indicating a bird on the opposite riverbank to where we were. 'Variable Oystercatcher', I replied after a casual glance. 'No it's not', he said, and a proper look revealed a Glossy Ibis.

The last time we got together in person was in Far North Queensland, where we enjoyed a day in the rainforests of the Julatten area, Mark picking up 7 lifers during the day.

To all who knew him, Mark was a very kind, helpful person and is greatly missed.



Other News of Interest

2026 Chatham Island Birding Tours

Tour 1: 9-16 March 2026

Tour 2: 16-23 March 2026

Led by Ela Hunt, Ornithologist Specialising in Chatham Island Birdlife

Join an expert-led expedition to the Chatham Islands – a rare opportunity to explore one of Aotearoa’s most unique birding destinations. With renowned ornithologist Ela Hunt as guide, these flexible, small-group tours include visits to key hotspots, predator-free sanctuaries, and special conservation projects.

Package includes:

Return flights to the Chathams, private accommodation, all meals, expert guiding, and all excursions.

Cost: NZ\$7,100 (excluding NZ domestic connecting flights and meals prior to arrival)

Full itinerary and details here: <https://travelwithlesleywhyte.com/bird-watching-tours/>

Keep an Eye Out for Banded Banded Dotterels

DOC is currently running a new **Banded Dotterel migration research project** and is seeking support from birders to help resight marked birds across Aotearoa.

How you can help:

If you spot a marked banded dotterel—whether you’re birding locally or travelling—please report it to DOC by emailing: **b.dot.resighting@doc.govt.nz**

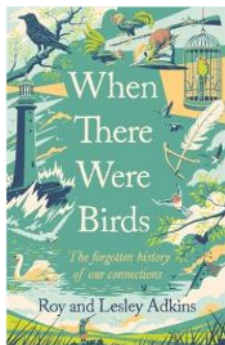
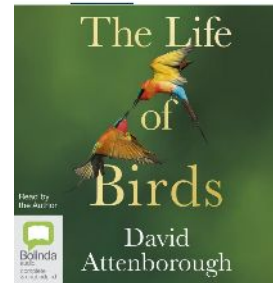
Include:

- **Description of the marked bird (band/flag details)**
- **Location**
- **Date and time of observation**

Have you read this? . . .

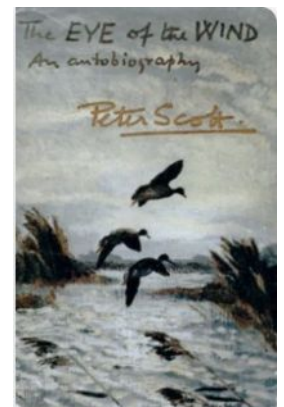
A selection of book or other recommendations

Janet Burton has recently listened to the audiobook edition of David Attenborough's *The Life of Birds* and recommends it highly. It's read by the author and runs for almost exactly 10 hours. Just think, ten hours of listening to that inimitable voice talking about birds—what more could one ask! Christchurch City Libraries has it available on BorrowBox, but you will likely need to put a reserve hold on it as it's a hot item just now. The library also has it in hard copy and e-book formats, and has the DVD video as well.



Following Janet's lead, I have a couple recommendations of my own. I recently got from the library and am now reading *When There Were Birds*, by Roy and Lesley Adkins. As the blurb on the dust jacket says, WTWB is 'a social history of Britain that charts the complex connections between people and birds, set against a background of changes in the landscape and evolving tastes, beliefs and behaviour'. It's written by laypeople for laypeople, so nothing too technical, but the quality of the writing and research strikes me as impeccable. – *ed.*

I'll also take this opportunity to point readers to the autobiography of Sir Peter Scott, son of Robert Falcon and irrepressible advocate of all wildlife but of birds in particular. Sir Peter was instrumental in the founding of the World Wildlife Fund (Worldwide Fund for Nature) and the IUCN, not to mention his own Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in the UK. The book was published in 1960, twenty years before his death, and so doesn't cover some of his crowning achievements, but the tales of punt-gunning on the Norfolk marshes, searching out the winter grounds of Ross's geese around the Caspian Sea, ringing White-fronteds in Iceland, cannon netting in Scotland—not to mention sailing, diving, gliding and war service—make it a fascinating read. CCC Libraries has *The Eye of the Wind* in hard copy. You might also enjoy Philippa Scott's memoirs, *Lucky Me*, which in addition to her own back story recounts their life together and the continuation of their joint legacy following Peter's death in 1980. Our library doesn't have this one, but you can access it for free on Internet Archive (<https://archive.org>). – *ed.*



If you have read anything particularly good about birds recently and would like to share it, please forward me your recommendation to the editor for inclusion in the next *Wrybill* (editor.cw@birdsNZ.org.nz).

Health & Safety for BirdsNZ Outings

For everyone to have an enjoyable time on field trips and other activities we need to make sure everyone stays safe. Here's how you can do your bit.

1. Wear clothing appropriate for the activity such as plenty of warm layers, hat and gloves in winter; a sunhat and sunglasses in summer. Bringing a raincoat is always a sensible option. Footwear needs to be suitable as well - think sturdy soles and good ankle support for many walks, especially on hills, something that can get wet and muddy especially at Lake Ellesmere in winter. Walking poles could be helpful to some on steep and/or uneven ground.
2. Be honest and open about your physical abilities. Not all trips will be suitable for everyone. If you have a pre-existing medical condition that could impact the trip (such as - but not limited to - asthma, allergy to bee stings, diabetes) please notify the trip leader of the condition, any problems that could arise and what the trip leader and others may be required to do to assist you. This information will be kept confidential unless a medical event requires it being shared. Make sure you bring whatever medications you may need.
3. Bring enough food and drink for the event plus a little extra in case the trip takes longer than planned. Fresh water is not always available and dehydration can be a concern in summer so bring your own drinking water.
4. Listen to the health and safety briefing given at the beginning of each trip, keep your eye out for any unexpected hazards and talk to the trip leader and others if you have any concerns along the way. Let the trip leader know of any accidents or near misses.
5. Stay with the group at all times unless you have the trip leader's okay.
6. The trip leader reserves the right to decline participation in any trip if they have concerns about anyone being unable to participate safely or not being suitably equipped.
7. Health and safety incidents or concerns must be reported to the trip leader/RR immediately.

Scopes for Loan

If you are in Canterbury and wish to borrow a scope, contact Sandra (sandraw67@gmail.com). If you are on the West Coast and wish to borrow a scope, contact Liz Meek (ronmeek555@gmail.com).

Canterbury Regional Contacts

Officers

Regional Representative: Anita Spencer

Email: birds.canterbury@birdsanz.org.nz

Phone: 020 4124 8185

Regional Recorder: Ben Ackerley

Email: bellbird568@gmail.com or record.cb@birdsanz.org.nz

Phone: 022 399 0604

Treasurer: Sharon Lake

Email: sharonlaketa@gmail.com

Phone: 027 684 4121

Additional Committee Members

Bev Alexander (birdiebev@xtra.co.nz; 03 313 7009)

Janet Burton (huish2006@hotmail.com)

Nick Allen (nick_allen@xtra.co.nz)

Don Goodale (breadmandon@gmail.com)

Mark Fraser (wcpetrelguy@hotmail.com)

Phil Crutchley (phil.crutchley@ccc.govt.nz)

Samuel Amaris (samuel.amaris.home@gmail.com)

Magazine Editor: Erick Akeley (editor.cw@birdsanz.org.nz; 021-0278-2909)

Many thanks to those who contributed to this edition of *The Wrybill*. Members wishing to submit articles and/or photos for the next issue are warmly encouraged to do so through the above email address.

Who We Are . . .



BirdsNZ Canterbury/West Coast is one of 19 regional branches of Birds New Zealand that provide a vibrant local network for members to engage in the study of birds and their habitats across Aotearoa. We do this through

- Monthly branch meetings, featuring bird ID tips and expert guest speakers

Where?



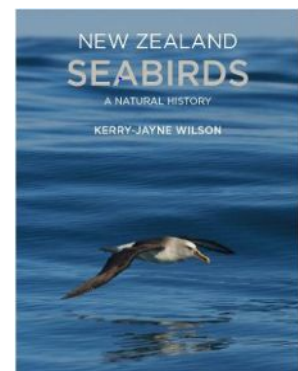
Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Plenty of parking available.

When?

7:30 pm on the last Monday of each month

- Regular Weekend Field Trips, often in support of ongoing research or survey projects
- Monthly midweek birding 'rambles' to local birding hotspots

Care to join us? Just come along to our next meeting or, alternatively, click on the link below <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/> for an application form and further information. Current annual fees are \$90 for New Zealand residents, or \$45 for students. As well as quarterly issues of our magazine, *Birds New Zealand*, new members now receive a complimentary copy of *New Zealand Seabirds: A Natural History*. Written by Kerry-Jayne Wilson, this stunning 136-page book features an informative text and over 100 full-colour photographs and maps, all offering invaluable insights into the lives of Aotearoa's seabirds.



BIRDS | SCIENCE | PEOPLE



Beach patrol at Sockburn, Darren Markin

Since setting up our Beach Patrol Scheme in 1951 our members have gathered over 30,000 records of 440,000 birds of 115 seabird species to map their coastal distribution

You can join Birds New Zealand for just \$1.75 a week.
That's \$90 a year, and just \$45 for students.

www.birdsnz.org.nz

JOIN US NOW OR DONATE

**BIRDS**
NEW ZEALAND
Te Kāhui Mātāi Maru o Aotearoa