



BIRDS
NEW ZEALAND
Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter August 2025

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Sacred kingfisher / Kōtare, photo by Paul Gibson

From the Regional Representative

I do not have much to write about this time. I am in Europe until the 22nd August. Phil Battley will run the August meeting. Thank you, Phil!

Stephen and I have been birding in England and Denmark but not much in Sweden yet. If you want to follow my birding in Europe, look at my trip reports on eBird:

England: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/388461> ,

Denmark: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/388512> ,

Sweden: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/388514>.

The most exciting was when Stephen saw a Bonaparte Gull at Oare Marshes Nature Reserve in England. I just dipped out. Funnily enough, I had just told another birder about my bad luck in Denmark many years ago when I dipped out on a Terek sandpiper. I was a bit behind Stephen; he jumped up and down and I knew he had seen the Bonaparte Gull. I hurried to see it, but when I arrived the gull had just gone behind a sand bank. I waited for a long while, but it did not come back up.



Bonaparte Gull, photo © Jim Sims [eBird S71321524](#)

We have also seen a couple of White-tailed Eagles in Denmark and Sweden.



White-tailed Eagle photo
© Ian Davies [eBird S28857002](#)

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 September issue is 25th August 2025.

Regional bird sightings

Here are the latest bird sightings from Neill Haggarty:

Fernbirds were heard and seen at the Koitiata reserve and on the Timber Trail.

A fantastic high count of 20 Nankeen Night Herons at Upokongaro has been made recently (see updates from Paul Gibson on next page).



Nankeen Night Heron by Paul Gibson

A spotless crake was reported from a dune lake 2 km south of Hokio beach. It would be nice to know how to access this location!

A bittern was sighted near the Mangahou river on the Pahiatua track, exact location is unclear.

Finally, 4 Cattle Egret were seen and photographed in a field near the Ohau Estuary.

Updates from Paul Gibson, Whanganui

I continue my obsession with **kingfishers**, one of my favourite birds. On most visits, at low tide, I've encountered 3 – 6 birds flitting around from rock to log, mostly between Beach Road and the Sailing Club. Yesterday, Friday, I had Graham Guy with me, and we had great success. I'll let the pictures tell the story.



On several afternoon visits to Upokongaro, on sunny days, I've found up to nine **Nankeen night herons** out in the London Plane tree sunning themselves before having to head out for the night again. One afternoon Jim and I found one adult and four young birds fishing in the stream below the carport. The café closes at 3pm and we had to leave. I did manage some amazing pictures of the adult bird flying up from the water. On Thursday night (17th of July) Jim and I were out there after sunset and observed 20 birds departing from their day roost for the night on the river. This is the highest count we have ever had.



Jane and I had a walk around Virginia Lake one morning, and there are always good birds to see, shags, shovellers, grebes etc.

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 **13th August 2025 Dr Bryony Griffiths, Wildlife Veterinary Resident, School of Veterinary Science, Massey University** will talk about:

Enderby - The Riviera of the Sub-Antarctic Isles

A falconer-turned-veterinarian, Bryony Griffiths has worked with many species from pygmy owls and peregrine falcons in the Canadian Rockies to New Zealand's own unique species like kea, kiwi, and kakī. She has spent her career working in different organizations in conservation of wildlife and public education. She recently started her Masters of Veterinary Studies and was presented with an opportunity to spend a quarter of a year in the remote sub-Antarctic islands monitoring NZ sea lion breeding colonies. There was no wasting a chance to observe some of the most unique and untouched landscapes as well as the plethora of avian life there.



Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

10th September. Liam Urquhart: Kiwi Vocalisation/ Masters thesis

15th October: Oscar Thomas: Western Pacific Odyssey: Long-tailed Mynas and Short-tailed Albatrosses (note that this meeting is on the third Wednesday of October)

12th November (TBD)

Upcoming trips

Saturday 13th or Sunday 14th September

Trip to Bushy Park the best weather day of the two. Neill Haggarty sent me three good reasons to go to Bushy Park told by three good photos (see below). We will leave Palmerston North at 8am, then we will be at Bushy Park at around 9:30am. I expect us to be back before 6pm. We might take a visit to Upokongaro on the way back. If you are interested in participating in the Trip contact Kirsten on:

kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com



Hihi / Stitchbird



Tieke / Saddleback

Toutouwai / North Island Robin



Links to other regions' newsletters and other material

Nelson, June 2025: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/nelson-newsletter/>

South Auckland, July 2025: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/>

Wellington, June 2025: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/wellington-newsletter/>

Link to a report from Samoa written by Ioane Etuale: ["SEABIRD KNOWLEDGE SURVEY"](#)

With support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) led by Karen Baird, the Sosaite Fa'asao Samoa/Samoa Conservation Society (SFS) was contracted to interview a range of individuals with information of Samoa seabirds. The project is funded by Birds New Zealand's Pacific Islands Bird Conservation and Research Fund. Our team followed the trail of eyewitness accounts of grounded birds, as well as traditional knowledge and accounts from personal experiences.

Notices

Link to scholarship opportunities:

Faunatech Grants:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/awards-and-prizes/other-scholarships/>

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/>

Registration opened 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."* (...)

"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."*

Photo by Chris Tuffley



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 September 2025 issue: 25 August 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

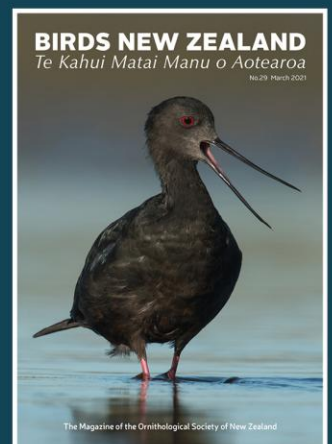
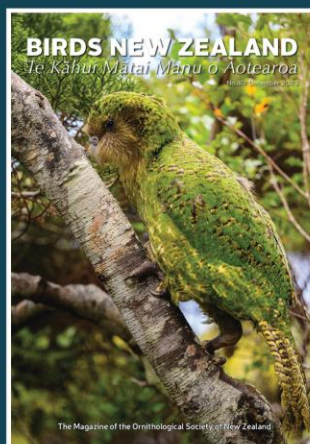
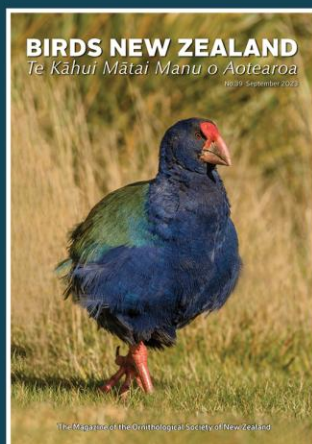
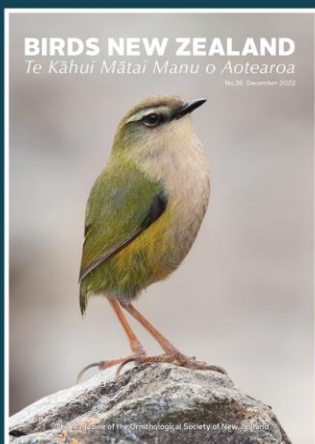
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

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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