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Otago Region Newsletter 5/2025

May 2025



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/birdsotago/>

Ornithological Snippets

There have been regular sightings of **South Island Takahe** | **Takahē** on the Greenstone-Caples and Rees-Dart Tracks. A **Marsh Crane** | **Kotoreke** on 2 May at Upper Tomahawk Lagoon was the first sighting there since July last year; 2 hybrid **Black x Pied Stilts** | **Kakī/Poaka** were at the same location on 17 May. 2 **SIPO** | **Tōrea** were at Balclutha on 6 May, and 4 the following week. 60 **Black-fronted Terns** | **Tarapirohe** on Lake Dunstan on 14th March were noteworthy, as were 4 nearby at Lindis Crossing on 9 April.

A **Little Black Shag** | **Kawau tūi** was reported from Queenstown Gardens on 17 April, while a **Royal Spoonbill** | **Kōtuku ngutupapa** near Tarras on 9 April was unexpected. There was a **Reef Heron** | **Matuku moana** on 1 April at Taiaroa Head, and 3 **Cattle Egret** on 15 May between Owaka and Pounaweia. Single **White Herons** | **Kōtuku** were seen at Glenorchy in the first week of April, Glenfalloch Gardens on 12 April, and 1 at Tomahawk Lagoon from 10 May.

2 **Kaka** | **Kākā** were reported from Lake Hayes on 20 May, and a **Cirl Bunting** on 1 May near Balclutha was in exactly the same location as on in 2021.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

The recent eBird Global Big Day was well supported in Otago, with the region contributing 53 unique checklists (not accounting for shared lists) from 25 observers. The species count was 84, which was 3 ahead of Canterbury, with Auckland 3rd on 79. These totals were significantly higher than in 2024.

Otago's Brown/Southern Skua, Northern Giant Petrel, Soft-plumaged Petrel and White-chinned Petrel were the only NZ records, while Yellow-eyed Penguin, and Otago/Foveaux Shag were not recorded anywhere else in the world on the day.

Checklist media

A new feature in eBird is the ability to add photos (and audio) not just of birds, but of habitat, other animals and the general birding experience. There is also a category for Experience, where you can upload photos that document your visit without being directly related to habitat. As with bird media, checklist media should match the location and time of the checklist.

Further details at <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001269559>

Richard 027 281 8701 or cluthaphotos@gmail.com

BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

Health & Safety



BirdsNZ Council have asked for Regional newsletters to include a standing request to report on Health & Safety issues.

A reminder to members that when involved with organised BirdsNZ Field Trips and activities, that we should not hesitate to call 111 to respond to medical events or incidents that result in harm.

If anyone has been involved in or is aware of an incident that resulted in harm to any of our activity participants, please contact the Regional Representative, so that the President and EO can be notified immediately

Plan ahead, stay safe while birding everyone.

Dawn: birds.otago@birds.nz.org.nz 027 442 7348

Updates and Messages from the Regional Representative

July Field Trip to Wawahi waka/ Pigeon Island in Lake Whakatipu

The Wawahi Waka / Pigeon Island hut has been book for July 4th to the 6th for a field trip.



You can check out the hut on the Queenstown Lakes District Council website. <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/recreation/parks-and-walkways/pigeon-island/>



It doesn't cost anything to use the hut which sleeps ten comfortably (12 max). It has ten mattresses on two platform bases. It provides heating (log burner), a small kitchen table and an outside long drop toilet. There is a lovely area for camping near the hut on the sunny lower terrace as well.

The hut does not provide running water, firewood, food, cooking utensils or gas burners, showers or bedding or toilet paper. Firewood can be gathered from driftwood around the island, please make sure the woodpile is restocked, we can bring some firewood.

The predator free island has a good network of tracks around it passing through regenerating shrubland, lancewood, and broadleaf with pockets of podocarp and red and mountain beech forest. Extensive restoration efforts followed some significant fires in 1995 and 2003 and the plantings are really thriving.

In September, 2002, 30 Buff Weka were translocated from the Chatham Islands to Te Peka Karara Island in Lake Wanaka. A total of 27 of their progeny were released onto both Matau/Pig and Pigeon Islands between December 2005 and the summer of 2010. 40 of their progeny were translocated to the Motatapu Valley 2011 and 2012 in an unsuccessful attempt to reintroduce them there; but they are certainly well established across both these Islands.

We've got 2 boats lined up and we'll confirm these closer to the time as this trip is weather dependent. We'll chip in with boat petrol costs and expect to travel across from Lake Face Creek off the Glenorchy Road about 2km from the island's southern bay.

If you are interested let Dawn Palmer know via birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz

So far we have 5 interested.



Changes to Conveners and Organisers

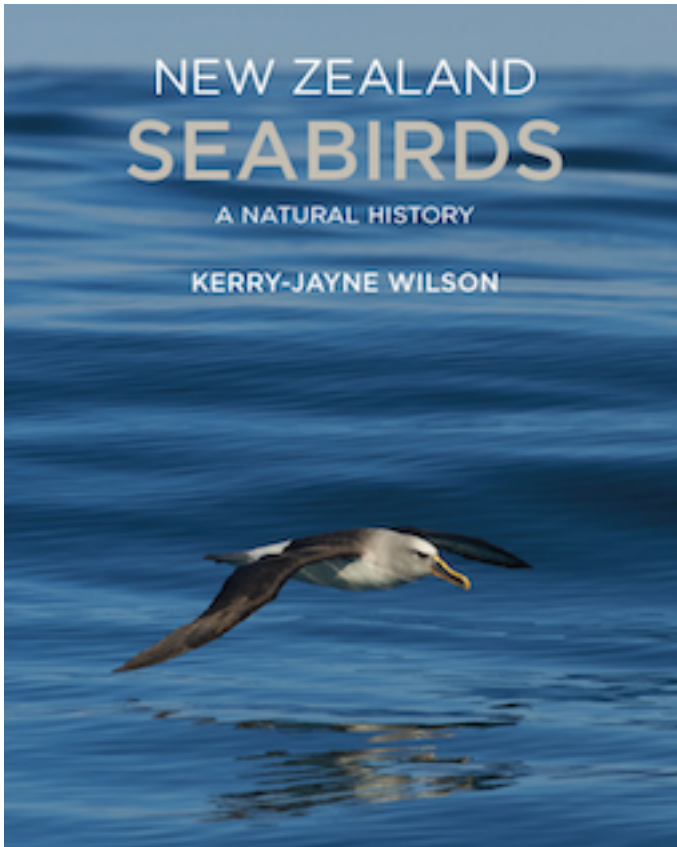
Terry Greene has taken on the Scientific Committee Convenor role, replacing Graeme Taylor.

Contact details are available at [birdsnz.org.nz/contact/](https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/contact/).

Links to the latest news and newsletters

News items:

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



New Zealand is the seabird capital of the world – no other country has so many species of breeding seabirds, while about a third of them are only found here. New Zealand Seabirds, the first book to be written specifically about these birds, describes the different groups of seabirds, where in New Zealand they occur, their breeding biology, feeding behaviours, the conservation threats they face, and the vast distances they often travel to feed and breed. Written using non-technical language by ornithologist Kerry-Jayne Wilson, this book is an essential companion for anyone who appreciates the wildlife of our coastlines and the oceans beyond.

Seabird Surveys of Aleipata Islands:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/seabird-surveys-of-aleipata-samoa-offshore-islands/>

Global Big Day – 10 May: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/global-big-day/>

Newsletters:

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

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

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

Waikato – May/June 2025: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/waikato-newsletter/>

Articles:

BNZRF 2024: N.I. Fernbird Moult:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2024-BNZRF-North-Island-Fernbird-Summary-article-2504.pdf>

PIBCRF 2023: Seabird Surveys Aleipata Islands:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2023-PIBCRF-Aleipata-Seabird-Survey-Final-Report-2505.pdf>

Page updates:

About Us / MOU Young Birders:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/MOU-YBNZ-Birds-NZ-2025.pdf>

Dawn

Wader Count June 2025

Wader count on **Sunday 22 June**. High tide (2.05M) at Dunedin will be at 12.57pm.

Reserve day is Sunday 20 July when a high tide of 1.98M occurs at 11.42am

All members are most welcome to participate.

Please note it is important to observe SIPOs closely. If it's possible record the colour and code of any banded/or flagged birds. Ideally take a photograph

Please contact Maree Johnstone at email: mareej@kinect.co.nz, or phone 027 6609446

SO MANY WAYS TO HELP OUR BIRDS



Birds New Zealand's Bird Atlas Project is recording bird populations and distribution around the country to inform evidence-based conservation and management.

www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/

JOIN US NOW



Programme 2025

Birds NZ Otago Branch meetings for 2025 will be held on the 4th Tuesday of the month (from February to November) in the Benham Seminar Room, 2nd floor of the Benham Building, [Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street](#), starting at 7.30pm. Please arrive prior to this as the doors lock automatically unless someone is there to open them from inside.

Tuesday 27 May	Janina Castro - Reflections on Bird Window Strikes in the Philippines
Tuesday 24 June	Jerusha Bennett - Parasites infecting Aotearoa birds / manu
Sat 4 to Sun 6 July	Pigeon Island / Wāwāhi Waka field trip (Contact Dawn)
Tuesday 22 July	Finn Stoneman - Foraging ecology of tawaki / Fiordland crested penguins in Dusky Sound
Tuesday 26 August	Peter Langlands - Breeding sites and success of Canterbury kaituku / bitterns
Tuesday 23 September	Ellen Hoy - Kuaka / Godwits of the Avon-Heathcote
Tuesday 28 October	Bruce McKinlay - Otago Harbour Bird Survey from 1977-2010
Tuesday 25 November	Annual Quiz Night!

Suggestions for locations for field trips and atlassing trips, and offers to help lead trips would really be appreciated, please contact Dawn birds.otago@birdsNZ.org.nz

Contributions for the next newsletter should reach the editor by **17 June** sodlin@gmail.com

Disclaimer

The content and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors, and are not officially endorsed by BirdsNZ or the compiler of this newsletter. They do not purport to reflect the opinions of Birds New Zealand.