



YOUTH CAMP GUIDELINES

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ORGANISING A YOUTH CAMP FOR TEEN BIRDERS

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Purpose

As stated in the Constitution of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Incorporated, the objectives and aims of Birds NZ are:

1. To encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use particularly within the New Zealand region.
2. To foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds generally.
3. To promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations.
4. To produce a journal and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest.
5. To effect co-operation and exchange of information with other organisations having similar aims and objects.
6. To assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information, from which sound management decisions can be derived.
7. To maintain a library of ornithological literature for the use of Members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds.
8. To promote the archiving of observations, studies and records of birds particularly in the New Zealand region.
9. To carry out any other activity which is capable of being conveniently carried out in connection with the above objects, or which directly or indirectly advances those objects or any of them.

The purpose of youth camps is to support teen birders in developing ornithological skills including field observations, data collection, identification, monitoring and contribution to national schemes.

Youth engagement strategy of Birds NZ

Birds NZ has an ageing membership. It is important to attract new members, including youth, to ensure the continuation of birding activity in New Zealand. Forest & Bird Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) caters for younger children, but they require accompaniment to activities by a parent/guardian, which becomes unattractive to teens. Primary schools are also well served with curriculum material on ecological subjects, but options are often more limited in high school. For teenagers, Young Birders New Zealand (YBNZ) is a youth-run group that aims to inspire youth interest in birds and develop their ornithological skills.

Birds NZ is targeting the 13-18 age range to ensure that those who enthusiastically engage with groups like KCC still have opportunities for birding activities, particularly in the field. Youth camps should be designed to allow teens to develop their birding skills, but also to give them the opportunity to interact with and learn from other teens, experienced birders, and tutors.

Timeline

- Appoint leader(s) and identify location
- Draft activity programme
- Draft budget
- APPROVAL/endorsement from local RR and from Council to proceed (minuted)
- Develop programme
- Confirm support team – all adults required
- Book venue

- Obtain any required permits/landowner permission etc
- Obtain FINANCE – through sponsors or funding applications
- Advertise for participants
- Select participants
- Finalise activity programme
- Plan detailed delivery (of each activity) and camp schedule
- Develop health and safety plan
- Communicate with applicants (success/wait list etc)
- Review gear list and amend if needed
- Participants provide permission form with dietary/medical/parent contact information
- Finalise menu and shopping list
- Plan logistics for arrival/departure of participants and adults
- Book van(s) if required/source a driver
- Engage with sponsor – promotion planning etc
- Book any required activities (ferries etc)
- Activity leads identify any equipment needs and make arrangements (mist nets etc)
- Send gear list to participants
- Request payment of camp fees
- Confirm plans with all supporting adults
- Show up and run the youth camp
- Collate all receipts and invoices and send to treasurer for refund/payment
- Write up camp summary and circulate to Council (add a small summary to this document)
- Have an attendee write a report on the camp for the Birds NZ magazine
- Ensure sponsor media arrangements met (if applicable)
- Thank you letters etc
- Email to parents/request feedback

Required Forms

- Interest form – for the participant
- General information/programme and payment
- Gear/equipment list
- Registration and permission form
- Medical form
- Code of behaviour agreement form
- At the conclusion of the camp: evaluation form – for the participant
- Health and safety guidelines – if requested by the parent

Appendix 6 – Generic Forms (all to be signed by a parent and the attendee)

Location, location, location

When choosing the location for a youth camp, you should consider:

- Camp leadership and local support
- Timing of camp
- Base camp facilities
- The programme and birding activities

Camp leadership and local support

One person may be willing to lead most of the organisation of camp, but this may be too large a commitment. An alternative approach is for a small committee to share the organisation between themselves. Local Birds NZ members often organise the camp; while people outside the region could do so, they should ideally liaise with local members to obtain their knowledge and support. Although it has not yet been tested, local young birders or YBNZ members may be interested in liaising with organizers when developing the camp programme.

Timing of camp

- April (term 1-2 holidays) – Consider the timing of public holidays, as this period typically includes Easter (and possibly ANZAC day). Weather can be good but can also be awful!
- Mid-year – Not recommended due to likelihood of adverse weather, lower bird activity etc.
- Term 3-4 holidays – Spring weather is likely to be unsettled, but there should be good bird activity. However, this is typically when older teens are preparing for school exams.
- December/January – Often when family holidays are, but it may work if enough notice is given.

See **Appendix 1 – comments on previous camps** for information about the timing of past camps.

Base camp facilities

Local knowledge is often useful when organising accommodation as some options may not be obvious to people who live outside the region. Campgrounds are often used, but whatever facility is chosen must be large enough to accommodate all the attendees and adult helpers that are staying onsite.

Bedrooms

You will need separate, lockable rooms/bunkrooms for males and females. Adults should have rooms separate from the youth but close enough to keep an eye on them/monitor noise levels. Make sure you know beforehand what, if any, gear is provided at the accommodation and what participants need to bring. Camping has been used before, with a tent each for boys and girls and small tents for supervisors, but large family sized tents were hard to come by. If you are planning to camp, ensure you have considered how viable this would be in bad weather.

Kitchen

You will need cooking and storage facilities for a large volume of food. If there is not enough fridge space for perishables, arrange for these to be resupplied at intervals or plan a menu without them. Find out beforehand about power availability and what cooking facilities and equipment are onsite. See **Appendix 1 – Kitchen checklist**.

Classroom/meeting room

You will need a room big enough to hold everyone for briefings/lectures/group activities/indoor back up options. Having a screen and data projector in this room is useful for classroom and wet weather activities.

Social space

This can be the classroom, but it works better if there is a separate informal space. It could also be the dining room.

Bathrooms/toilets

Ensure there are separate facilities for males and females OR if there are limited unisex facilities, specify times for male/female use (in 2015, pink or blue post-it notes were used on the shower area door). You must know when toilets will be available during field activities and communicate this to the teens during pre-activity briefings. If bathrooms are unavailable during field activities, ensure that there is a way for participants to clean their hands after activities like beach patrols and banding.

The programme

Programme draft

This should outline possible activities, ideally more than you need in case some become too challenging or impractical, with at least one main activity for each day. The field activity schedule should allow for a variety of activities across a wide range of species, including the opportunity to see rare species if possible – diversity is key to success. It's normally best to avoid excessive travel as it reduces the time available in the field, but some camps with more extensive travel have worked in the past. Classroom time can be used to support field activities (e.g. to introduce a topic and debrief afterwards) to cover different topics to those covered in the field, and for backup activities in case of rain.

Activities should reflect the interests/experience of the organisers, regional projects, and the best birds/birding locations in the area. Consider whether some activities should logically come before others, and whether some need to be timed (e.g., for certain tides). If return visits are planned to a site, add new activities or escalate the previous one – in at least one case, a return visit to a site led to obvious boredom for some. In the past, participants have been quite robust and willing under more challenging circumstances (e.g., rough seas, dense swamp vegetation), and they may even be more enthusiastic than their tutors. However, it is important to bear in mind that some participants might not be, especially if those factors have not been made clear beforehand, and alternative activities should be made available for anyone unwilling.

Make sure you will be able to access to the sites you need for the planned activities. Even if you are familiar with a site, access rules may have changed or be different for a large group. For example, vehicle access to the Hunua Ranges required a few phone calls in 2016 but several rounds of form filling over a couple of departments in 2024.

See the “Birding activities” section for activity ideas.

Assembling tutors

Ensure you have enough tutors to meet the health and safety requirements and to allow all students the opportunity for some individual assistance in the field. While you may want some outside experts (e.g., for banding), often tutors can be experienced adult birders from the local region.

Bonding

While some attendees will likely know each other, some may not. It is best to mix up group compositions between different group activities and chores to ensure everyone is interacting and to avoid anyone being left out. Ice breakers could be used early on if needed.

Down time

It is important to get a balance between having sufficient downtime and ensuring the youth have enough to do. Camps typically have full days with early starts. While this has not been a problem so far, it is good to offer the chance for some downtime or social time just before/after lunch and in the

evenings so teens can recharge or catch up on sleep. Providing some games/puzzles for these times can be useful.

Birding activities

The purpose of the camp is to support the development of birding skills in our teen birders. It is expected that participants have a good knowledge of New Zealand birds – this is NOT intended as a camp for beginners. Youth typically have good access to information about twitching and eBird use but the value and attraction of particular studies is generally less appreciated. If someone has a special interest or project, consider building a field activity or classroom session around it. It can help to build in activities early on that give you an idea of participants' bird identification skill level (visual and calls) so you can adjust the programme if needed.

Activities that provide an indication of participants' skill levels include:

- ID quiz
- Bird call quiz
- Five-minute bird counts (5MBCs) in the field
- General discussion about experience, eBird use and notebook use
- Ask participants to describe their favourite bird (in some detail). This gives an idea of what sort of technical level of detail they can use (supercilium, tertial feathers etc)

Some of this should be apparent from their applications.

As part of pre-camp checks (or by amending the application form if you prefer), identify whether participants have their own binoculars or need to borrow some. If scopes are required, they will probably need to be borrowed from local adult helpers/Birds NZ members.

Bird identification

There should be a good range of birds to practice on at base camp. These can be primarily introduced (finches, starlings, thrushes etc) but having at least some common natives is desirable.

Activity: After a briefing on what sort of things to record (in notes/diagrams), go and observe a bird and record all the information that you can on its identification features (e.g., physical description, behaviour, calls, flight patterns). Field sketches should be encouraged. Good background data should also be included (habitat use, weather, time, date etc).

Classroom time

Time in the classroom can be useful to support field activities, to cover different topics, and in case of rain. It can be used in several ways:

- Introduction before field activities and debrief after them.
- Nighttime debrief – housekeeping, recap the day's activities, create the daily bird list.
- Preparation for or an extension of a field activity e.g., discussion about band recoveries, how to read bird bands, or the process of bird banding before banding in the field, or how to identify and describe birds before practising notebook use.
- Discussion of topics not specifically covered in the field (e.g., ethical behaviour about approaching birds, counts and survey techniques, recording data for yourself and the birding community).

Introduction to Birds NZ national research schemes

Birds NZ runs a variety of national schemes, including the beach patrol, moult recording, and nest record schemes, details of which can be found on <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/research/#projects>. An indoor activity should provide a brief introduction to these schemes to ensure participants are aware of, and to help encourage future participation in, different Birds NZ activities. This could be supported by field activities as appropriate (e.g., undertaking a beach patrol, practicing a wader count, etc).

Camp daily bird list

All participants should keep their own daily list to be combined each evening into the camp list for the day. This allows for discussion about uncommon sightings, and some moderation by the experts if there are disputed species on anyone's list. It is useful to identify the different locations throughout the day separately – and note which species were found in multiple locations.

Example: Orongo Bay 2017 – Day 2 – locations were: C-Camp, B-Boat, I- Island (Urupukapuka)

- Tarapunga/Red-billed Gull B, I
- Tiu/House Sparrow C, I
- Banded Rail C, I

Activity: Have a recorder write all the birds down, going around the group with each youth offering one bird they saw/heard and others adding additional locations the same species was seen (if applicable). Repeat until there are no new birds to record. This can be run using common, Māori, and/or scientific names. Specific names should be used (e.g., “welcome swallow” instead of “swallow”). There can be some debate about countable species (e.g., wild vs feral turkey), and a copy of the latest checklist or access to NZ Birds online is useful. Ensure anything reportable is submitted as an Unusual Bird Report (UBR). Make sure that you accept participants' records in good faith – even if some people (youth or adults) on the camp did not see a bird, that doesn't necessarily mean it wasn't seen by others.

Monitoring techniques

- 5MBCs, 5-minute presence/absence, transect counts etc
- Kiwi/morepork call surveys
- Optional other wildlife unique to location (Mana Island 2015 – geckos)

Use techniques as described in Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox (DOC website) or other standard reference, so participants can find and reuse the information. Reinforce the use of eBird to enter the data and refer to Birds NZ schemes (e.g., moult, nest record, beach patrol) where possible.

Mist netting

Mist netting is hugely popular – in some cases, it is the only opportunity teens have to handle a bird. Close supervision (after appropriate instruction) is needed. You **MUST** have the required permits to capture/handle birds at the specified location **AND** you must have certified Level 3 banders to run the sessions. This requires advance planning, especially if running the camp in April – this is core translocation season. Orchards are often a good site for mist netting, especially from January as fruit begins to ripen. Mist netting may not be advisable during the breeding season, which should be considered when deciding on the timing of the camp.

Travel

Camp organisers must know each participant's travel arrangements to and from camp and arrange for them to be met/taken to airports, bus stations etc. Ensure there is a responsible adult present to meet teens at the airport, bus station, etc. Organisers are responsible for the safety of all participants from when they are met to when they are delivered back to their parents or seen onto their transport home. Ensure teens are accompanied until they have boarded their flight/bus and then contact their parent/guardian to let them know.

Unaccompanied minors/young travellers:

Airlines have strict rules about young people travelling. The age limit is 12 for "unaccompanied minors". Teens are allowed to travel solo, but must present proof of age (e.g., passport or birth certificate) if requested. If there is no proof of age, they will NOT be allowed on the plane even if they have a parent/guardian at the airport.

Camp size

The number of participants is determined by capacity at base camp, adult support, and costs. In the past, a group size of 12-15 young birders has worked well, while a group of 20 was too large. If you intend to have a larger group, you will need to carefully consider activities and staffing.

Capacity at base camp

The number of beds available may be the main limiting factor to camp size.

Adult support

At least one male and one female adult must spend the night on-site; more may be required depending on the size of the camp. There must be a ratio of 1 adult for every 4 teens at all times. If undertaking night work/more dangerous activities, you will need 1 adult for every 3 teens.

All adults assisting with the organization and/or delivery of a youth camp, including the camp leader, are expected to do so in a voluntary capacity, unless otherwise agreed. Adults do NOT need to have police checks done (we have confirmed this with NZ Police) as this is not the organisation's core business. However, the leader should ensure that all adult support crew are well vetted informally (i.e. are known Birds NZ members or recommended personally).

Adult support needs to cover a range of skill sets:

Camp leader

The camp leader should oversee the delivery of the camp once participants have arrived. Ideally, they should have been involved in the organisation of the camp, so they have a good understanding of the planning, finances, etc. They have the final say on decision making (e.g., additional costs, health and safety planning, etc).

Bird experts

Participants need experienced, knowledgeable birders to learn from. You may be able to bring extras in for short periods if needed. These can include scientists/species specialists/local members with specific knowledge, career ecologists, DOC staff, etc. The specific numbers and experience of expert birders should be considered when planning the camp programme.

Level 3 certified banders (if banding)

You MUST have properly certified banders (Level 3) for mist netting and banding. The DOC banding office can supply a list if you do not know who to contact. Ensure you have enough Level 3 banders to supervise the number of attendees.

Local expert

At least one person must know the local sites and species well. They should be able to advise on things like driving instructions, maps/plans/walk timings for local sites, and should also be involved in developing and reviewing the health and safety plan. They may know local DOC staff who would need to advise on permits if activities are on Public Conservation Land (DOC managed land).

Camp chef

Typically, one person is responsible for developing the menu, building the shopping list, shopping for food, taking account of allergies and dietary needs, and cooking. This is an important job that can be difficult to fill, so it is useful to know early on how this will be managed. Professional caterers have been used on some camps. They are more expensive, but may have the knowledge to buy food more efficiently and partly offset the extra cost. The camp chef is also often responsible for base camp operations – any cleaning rosters, ensuring things are locked up, etc.

Drivers

No special licence is required to drive the 12/13 seater passenger vans, but it is useful to have a confident driver with van experience. The hire company will require a credit card and signature (even if the van hire has been paid on a separate credit card). As stated in the H&S guidelines, all drivers must have a current full driver's licence and, if using their own vehicle, have a current WOF. Make sure there are enough seats available for everyone when being transported between activities.

Finance

A rough budget should be prepared as soon as possible to give an idea of likely costs. A draft budget will also need to be provided to Birds NZ Council when seeking their endorsement/approval of the camp. This should detail all the expected costs associated with the camp and plans for funding. Ensure adult costs are factored into the calculations – including whether they are paying for their own food/accommodation, or whether this is being offset by participant contributions or funding. Funding the camp must be organised before committing to bookings/suppliers/participants

The main youth camp costs are likely to be the following:

- Accommodation – per person, per night
- Transport – van hire, petrol, ferry/boats. Note: participants are responsible for their own travel to/from the camp meeting point, so those costs (e.g., flights) are not included here.
- Food – calculate at \$20 per person per day (\$100 per person for a 5 day camp).

For the 2024 Miranda camp, \$30 per person (students and adults) per day was budgeted for, though this was more than was spent.

There are three main funding options, and a mixture of each is preferred:

Participant contribution

This was kept at \$100 for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 camps, but was raised to \$200 for the 2018 camp and in 2024. Participant contributions cannot be too high, or they will become off-putting for youth who may otherwise be interested in attending.

Grant funding

Some organisers have gotten grants to subsidise costs or have used branch funds. Birds NZ has regularly provided funding for youth camps.

2015 – Funding was successfully sought from Lotteries Grants that covered transport and food. The process required budgeting in advance, Birds NZ Council approval and documentation in meeting minutes, money to be spent within a specified timeframe, and accounts to be presented within a certain time after the event. The full amount sought was funded. Due to late changes at short notice, Birds NZ funded the shortfall for accommodation costs on Matiu-Somes Island. Participants (and adults?) paid \$100 each.

Sponsorship

Where sponsorship is part of the funding approach, you need to discuss the sponsor's needs. These will likely include publicity photos, recognition in written material (Regional Newsletters, Birds NZ Magazine), and to be mentioned at the conference. Other publicity may also be required; for example, Goodness Kitchen required daily Facebook updates from a participant.

Appendix 3 – Previous Costs and Sponsorships

Finance paperwork

Invoices will be paid directly by the Birds NZ Treasurer.

There are two approaches that can be taken for paying camp associated costs:

1. The best approach is for all invoices to be paid directly by the Birds NZ Treasurer and all expenses which are not done by invoice to be paid locally. Combined receipts for all invoices must then be submitted to the Birds NZ Treasurer as a package for reimbursement shortly after camp.

Participants payment instructions:

- Deposit to central Birds NZ account.
 - Use "participant name" and "Bird Camp" as references.
 - Advise treasurer of how many payments are expected and the list of names.
2. An alternative approach is for the local Birds NZ Region to deal with all finances (income and expenses) and then reconcile these with the Birds NZ Treasurer.

No matter which approach is taken, full invoices and all receipts are required and must be presented to the Birds NZ Treasurer to claim reimbursement and reconcile income and expenses. If there is any profit from the camp, or any money left over, this will be transferred to the national Birds NZ accounts. Camp organisers must arrange this with the Birds NZ Treasurer. If there happen to be any losses from the camp, these will be covered by the national Birds NZ accounts.

Food

Ensure you ask about dietary requirements and refer to this when planning the menu. Pay particular attention to allergies; dairy, gluten, and peanuts are the most common. There are also likely to be a fair number of vegetarians (e.g., 5 of 12 teens in 2017 were vegetarian).

You typically need to have a nominated camp chef (possibly with an assistant). Participants will usually be busy during meal preparation but can help with dishes and clean-up.

Make sure there is plenty of food available, including snacks between meals and seconds/fillers at dinner. You will probably need to have packed lunches (e.g., sandwiches, frittata) and snacks taken into the field.

Appendix 7 – Kitchen Checklist.

Advertising

There is now an email youthcamp@birdsNZ.org.nz – please contact Roger Sharp for the password. You will need a promotional flyer to send via attachment (example – see appendix 5). Aim to send these out as early as possible so they can get a wide reach. Places to contact with promotional flyers and emails include:

- Email the flyer to the Birds NZ EO eo@birdsNZ.org.nz so the camp can be advertised on the Birds NZ website, magazine, social media, and to RRs across all Birds NZ regions (who can then forward it on to the members within their region). Note – RRs often appreciate if they are notified before other networks.
- Previous attendees
- Secondary schools (there is an online directory of contact details) and homeschool groups
- Forest and Bird Youth and local environmental groups
- Birds NZ and Young Birders NZ social media, and Birding NZ Forum

Equipment needed

- First Aid Kits
- Several hand guides/reference books
- Whiteboard and markers/post its etc (if possible)
- A data screen/projector for classroom and bad-weather activities (if possible)
- Data sheets for activities such as field surveys and 5MBCs, pencils, and notebooks if needed
- Any handouts
- Brochure/map if necessary
- Forms e.g. feedback form, copies of the health and safety plan
- Mist netting and banding equipment e.g., nets, poles, ropes, bird bags, bands, pliers, scales
- Scopes (if needed for activities)

Communication

Before camp

- Ensure the main leading adult keeps in email contact with parents (and participants, if they have their own email accounts). Keep all communications until after camp, especially any containing financial information.

- Ensure forms are up to date before circulating them to parents/participants. If you plan to take a team photo or other photos that will be shared, you will need to include a photo waiver on the permission form for parents/guardians to sign.
- Ask Birds NZ EO to update the website for you as required.

During camp

The leader should have all participants' and adults' mobile numbers in their phone. It is also important to have parent contact numbers readily available. Mobile coverage should normally allow teams to maintain contact but ensure there are plans in place to cover any out-of-range sites. A WhatsApp group may be a useful method of communicating.

After camp

- Send a thank you email to supporting adults, especially the main local contact.
- Ask one or two participants to write an article for the Birds NZ magazine, with photos.
- Write a short summary of the camp for Council.

Youth feedback

Getting feedback from participants around what they enjoyed and any suggestions for improvement is an important tool for the organization of future camps. It is best to have participants fill out feedback forms on the last day of camp while it is still fresh in their minds, but you can request feedback in a follow-up email after camp. There is a feedback form in the generic form file

Appendix 4 – Participants Feedback from Previous Camps

Health and Safety

(for a more detailed Health and Safety Policy – see the [Generic Forms](#) file)

Birds NZ is legally required to make sure that all its activities – including youth camps – meet its health and safety obligations. When constructing the health and safety plans for the camp, refer to the Birds New Zealand Health and Safety Policy, the Health and Safety Guidelines for Field Trips, and the Hazards and Risks Assessment Form. These can all be found on the Birds NZ website. Instances of accidents or ill health of any participants during the camp are required to be reported to the camp leader, who in turn must advise the Executive Officer and President.

You will need one health and safety plan that covers all the activities in the programme. You can review the existing plans from previous years and reuse sections appropriately, but it is important to consider the hazards specific to the activities you will be doing. You will be able to use the standard information for walking on tracks etc. Then consider carefully how to manage activities such as:

- Night work
- Coastal cliffs (seabird work)
- Beach patrol – handwashing hygiene
- Bird handling – handwashing hygiene
- Boating (pelagic)
- Tree climbing

In most cases, what you need to do is:

- Ensure an appropriate ratio of adults: participants
- Conduct safety briefings before activities to make participants aware of potential hazards

- Ensure appropriate clothing for the weather – raincoats, sunhats and sunscreen
- Ensure first aid kits are carried on field activities and that hand washing facilities/hand sanitizer are available where necessary (e.g., before handling food, after activities like banding). There should be at least one comprehensive first aid kit at base camp. First aid kits need to be carried in the field – one in each vehicle, or one per team leader. They can be tailored for known issues based on participants’ medical forms.

Note: the teens will likely want to be birding early around the camp. Make sure that they are clear on where they are allowed to go and any restricted areas. Generally, they should either be supervised or have permission in advance to go to a certain location for a specific period.

Medical needs

You should have been informed by parents of any specific medical needs on the permission form. You may need to monitor that medication has been taken, if requested to do so. If allergies have been indicated, find out how severe these are, whether epi-pens are needed etc.

If you are including a pelagic, make parents aware that the teens are responsible for their own choices about whether to take medication such as Sea Legs. Do not provide or issue medication unless authorised to do so by the parents.

First Aid kits should contain enough to deal with physical injury and not medication (except Panadol). If possible, adult supporters should have first aid training.

Sickness

If a camp participant becomes unwell, their condition will be monitored by adult organizers and, if deemed necessary, they will be taken for medical treatment and their parent/guardian will be contacted. Adult organizers will organize for an attendee to be sent home if either the adults or the parent/guardian feel this is required for medical reasons. In cases where medical treatment or an early return from camp are required, these costs may be covered at the time, but the attendee’s parent/guardian will be required to provide reimbursement.

Code of Conduct

The Birds New Zealand Code of Conduct, which can be found in the Birds NZ Manual, states that “Birds New Zealand | Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa (hereafter Birds NZ) is committed to providing a safe, harassment-free environment for our members and participants engaging in Birds NZ events and activities...”. The Code of Conduct should be circulated to youth and their guardians prior to camp, to ensure everyone is familiar with the expectations of how they should behave, both in person and on-line.

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Updated 2021: Lynne Anderson

Updated 2025: Eleanor Gunby

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Comments on previous camps

2015 Mana/Matiu-Somes Islands (Birds NZ Wellington Region)

This camp was intended to be based on Mana Island for the full 5 days. Due to awful weather, the boat could not get to Mana Island. At short notice, camp was diverted to begin on Matiu-Somes Island, with a shift to Mana on Day 3. This caused additional accommodation and ferry expenses (unbudgeted). If there is boat access to your location, ensure you have a back-up plan!

2016 Miranda Shorebird Centre, Firth of Thames (Birds NZ Waikato Region)

Some participants were driven to camp, while others flew into Auckland Airport (from a variety of places) and were collected up and driven in a rental van to camp. An adult needs to be at the airport to meet the first incoming flight. Flights need to be timed so everyone arrives within a reasonable window (about 2 hrs). The adult should have a list of all flight numbers and expected arrival times and ensure there is a clear meeting point. They should provide their mobile number to all incoming participants so they can be contacted easily at the airport.

2017 Orongo Bay Holiday Camp (Birds NZ Far North Region)

Participants flew/were driven to Auckland Airport for pick up by van and car. This was due to the expense and limited seating on flights to closer locations such as Whangarei or Kerikeri. Auckland to Russell was designed as a road trip with birding hotspot visits along the way:

- Johnsons Point Road, Waipu – fairy tern
- Limeburners Creek and Waro Lake Reserve – Australasian little grebe (no grebes found)

Arrival at camp was approximately 6pm after 12pm departure from Auckland Airport. No-one complained of travel sickness luckily, but this is quite a long time to spend in the car, and it is probably better to reduce that if possible. Drive time from Whangarei would be under 2 hours – but the cost of flying to Whangarei may have been prohibitive for some participants

2018 Southland/Stewart Island Camp (Birds NZ Southland Region)

Participants flew into Dunedin or Invercargill. Adults collected participants from the airports and drove them to Invercargill. Two pickups were arranged from Dunedin airport at different times (one mid-morning, one mid-afternoon) to accommodate the different arrival times of participants. Participants travelled to and from Stewart Island by ferry. Despite poor weather and some ferry cancellations, luckily both ferry trips were able to go ahead as planned.

2019 Marlborough (Birds NZ Marlborough Region) – precis of camp report

The Marlborough branch held a youth camp for 16 students from the 15th to 20th of April 2019. Teenagers arrived from a far north as Tutukaka and south as Dunedin. The weather was perfect for the entire week. Field activities included the Brancott Estate Falcon Trust, Blumine Island, a coastal walk from Marfells Beach to Cape Campbell, Lake Elterwater, banding passerines and handling Harriers, gull band reading, Wairau Lagoon walk, visits to Taylor Dam and Kaipupu Point Sanctuary. Evenings were filled with guest speakers on bird painting, work with Caspian terns and Australasian gannets, eBird, bird photography, and Lake Elterwater.

2021 Hawke's Bay

The camp spent 4 nights in the Napier area at a Holiday Park where a house and two motel units were hired. They then moved on to Boundary Stream (near Tutira) for 3 nights and stayed in the DOC volunteer quarters. There were 4 locals. Two flew in from Auckland and were met by Birds NZ members (one was an unaccompanied minor). One was collected in Cambridge by the camp leader in the van on the way down from Auckland. Two drove up with family from Wellington (one had flown over from Nelson). The rest were driven by family.

2024 Makarora (8-13 January 2024) – summary of camp report

Field activities included 5 minute bird counts, mist netting/bird banding, braided river bird monitoring and river crossing techniques, invasive predator control for introduced mammals and avian predators (Southern black-backed gull). Monitoring techniques for whio, invasive predators, bat and moth surveys coupled with informative presentations. A total of 42 bird species were recorded during the week (including awesome nocturnal viewing of ruru/morepork) as well as over 70 species of lepidoptera, with additional records of invertebrates, other fauna and flora. Best practice for biological recording was encouraged with sessions on the important National Bird Atlas programme/ Ebird (from local verifier R Schofield) and I Naturalist. Bonus activities included a high rope assisted tree climbing demonstration, canopy mist net assemblage, natural foraging and an interactive quiz (consolidating knowledge gained) with prizes!

2024 Nelson (28 September-4 October 2024) – summary of RHL camp report

The Enthusiasm was astonishing and illustrated by the 77 species count with 253 Ebird checklists. Highlights included dusk wader roost viewing experience at the iconic wetland site of International Importance Farewell Spit RAMSAR designation, a Cape Farewell predator-fenced enclosure visit with nesting diving petrel and fluttering shearwater, and a diverse range of birds including booming bitterns, fernbird, spotless crane, ruru and weka. Evening presentations on the ecological importance of two important wetland locations were included and Bradley Shields was a great addition (as a former Bird Youth Camp attendee) helping with field visits at Mangarākau and with his informative presentation on conservation work in action with ZIP on the West Coast. Mist netting installation practice challenged previous students and new ones enjoyed learning about NNBBS with interactive banding activities.

Appendix 2 – Size of previous camps

2015 - Mana Island - 11

2016 - Miranda - 12

2017 - Orongo Bay - 12

2018 - Stewart Island - 22

2019 - Marlborough - 16

2020 - no camp due to Covid 19 lockdown

2021 - Hawke's Bay - 13 (although one went home sick on day 2)

2024 - Makarora - 14

Appendix 3 – Previous costs and sponsorships

Previously there has been sponsorship from Goodness Kitchen that has been put towards camps.

2016:

- Participants at \$100 each
- Goodness Kitchen sponsorship for remaining full cost of camp

2017:

- Participants at \$100 each
- Donation of accommodation costs by Orongo Bay Holiday Park
- Adults on pelagic trip \$150 each
- Goodness Kitchen sponsorship for remaining costs

2021:

- Participants paid \$200 each
- Hawke's Bay region contributed \$500.
- The cost of the van was generously donated.
- Very few adult supervisors claimed expenses
- Council made up the deficit of about \$600

Appendix 4 – Participant feedback from previous camps

2015 – More mist netting please.

2016 – More mist netting please; the dissection was great.

2017 – The pelagic was good.

2021 – More mist netting! More classroom time – the evening before talk about the birds we will be targeting the next day, what to look for etc. We had a vote on the best bird of the camp.

2024 - Enjoyed seeing lifers and learning new calls, meeting new like-minded people, learning about conservation, and learning about other parts of the ecosystem (moths, skinks, geckos).

2024 – Participants enjoyed meeting new like-minded people, gaining lifers, learning new skills, and seeing the lizards.

Appendix 5 – Flyer

See separate file.

Appendix 6 – Generic forms

See separate file.

Appendix 7 – Kitchen checklist

- BBQ
- Stove – gas or electric?
- Microwaves or toasters?
- Fridge/freezer space?
- Sufficient large pots
- Baking trays
- Lasagne pans
- Good knives
- Crockpots recommended
- LOTS of tea towels
- Crockery and cutlery
- Sensible dishwashing arrangements
- Serving utensils
- Plastic bins/fish bins and chilly bins for transporting food (if required by biosecurity)
- Rubbish bags for recycling etc
- COFFEE PLUNGER!!!

Appendix 8 – General youth permission form



BIRDS NEW ZEALAND PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

For participants under 18 years of age

To be read and signed by the parent/legal guardian of the participant

Full name of young person:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Phone number(s):

Date of birth:

I confirm that I agree to the young person named on this form participating in activities organised by Birds New Zealand.

Signature:

Date:

Print name:

Relationship to participant:

Address if different from above:

Email:

Phone number(s):

Data Protection Statement: This information will be securely held by Birds New Zealand. Details will not be supplied to any third party.