



THE  
**ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
OF NEW ZEALAND  
(INCORPORATED)

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*Otago Region Newsletter 1/2005 January 2005*

**Otago Summer Wader Count, 7 November 2004**

	Aramoana	Papanui Inlet	Hooper's Inlet	Harbour West	Harbour East	LPG Depot	Total
<b>SIPO</b>	73	86	107		18	1	285
<b>VOC</b>		8	10		16		34
<b>Bar-tailed Godwit</b>	234	2	548				784
<b>Banded Dotterel</b>			9				9
<b>Pied Stilt</b>		2	30		2		34
<b>Royal Spoonbill</b>							0
<b>White Heron</b>				1			1
<b>White-faced Heron</b>	1	17	7		8		33
<b>Caspian Tern</b>	1	1			1		3
<b>Black-fronted Tern</b>	1	1			1		3
<b>Kingfisher</b>	1	1	2				4

**Karitane Seabirds**

Some 1-2 km out of Karitane on 23 January 2005, attracted to large lumps of frozen sharks liver were:

**Southern Royal Albatross** 2  
**White-capped Mollymawk** ~10, all adults  
**Buller's Mollymawk** 1  
**Cape Pigeon** ~10

**Sooty Shearwater ~3**

**Hutton's Shearwater ~3**

**Black-backed, Red-billed and 1juv Black-billed Gulls**

**White-fronted Terns**

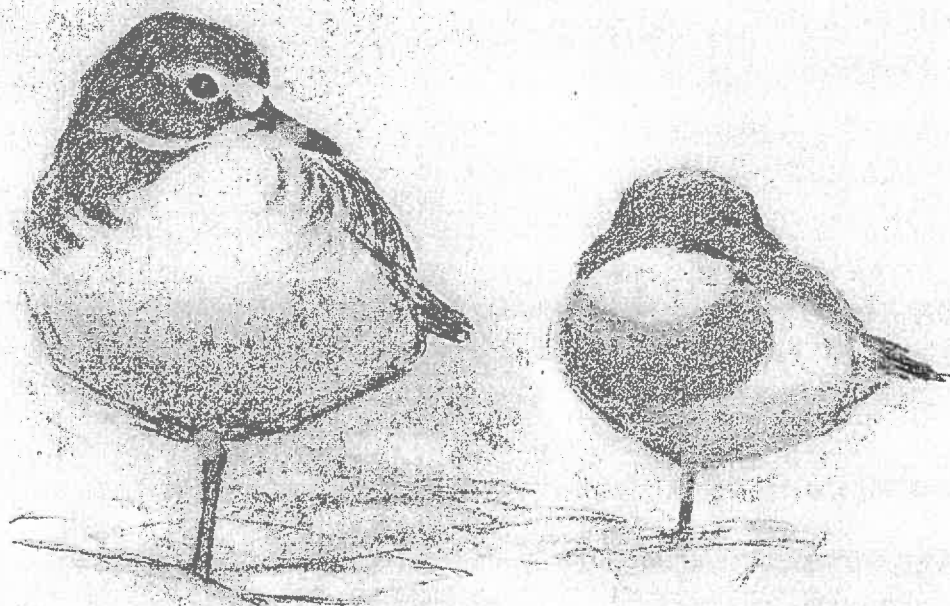
In addition behind a returning fishing boat there were hundreds of **White-capped Mollymawks**, again mostly adult but including some immature birds, ~100 **White-chinned Petrels** accompanied by at least 2 **Westland Black Petrels** (which came close enough to see the dark tip to the bill) and a fair number of **Sooty Shearwaters** and **Cape Pigeons**. We only saw **Hutton's Shearwaters** off Karitane but there were both **Hutton's** and **Fluttering** off the end of Aramoana Mole on 24 January 2005.

Derek Onley

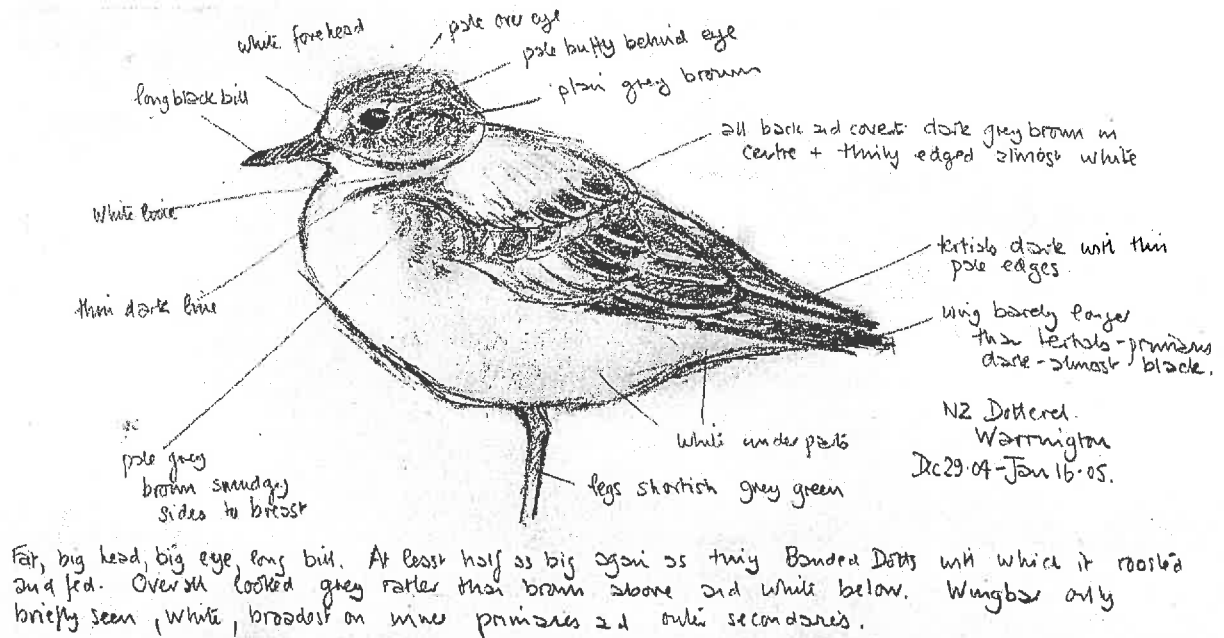
### **Waders from Blueskin Bay**

**Bar-tailed Godwits** at Blueskin Bay increased to 797 on 14 Jan 2005 and there was still at least one orange-flagged bird. A **New Zealand Dotterel** was roosting with the **Banded Dotterels** at the end of Warrington Spit on the 29 Dec 2004 and 16 Jan 2005, and I have drawn them (below). This record is the first for Otago for many years, probably since they were exterminated from the South Island breeding sites.

Derek Onley



112 Dot Warrington  
16 Jan 05



## Bar-tailed Godwit Survey

On the 6th February 2005 we counted **Godwits** at most of the larger high tide roosts in coastal Otago. A total of 1753 birds were seen of which 3 had flags on their tibia.

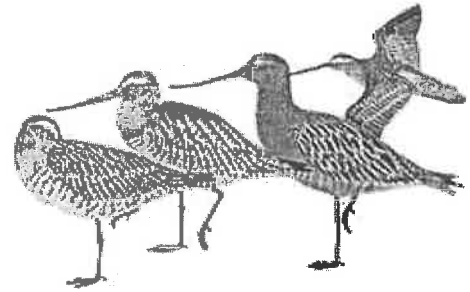
• Aramoana	201	1 orange flag
• Papanui	2	
• Hoopers Inlet	670	1 orange flag
• Blueskin Bay	450	
• Karitane	154	
• Catlins, Pounawea	339	1 white over black flag

Orange flags are birds banded in Victoria, Australia any time after the early 1990's! The White over Black bird was banded in Chongming, China in the last two years.

Coloured flags have been used on waders for over a decade or so and compared with colour bands are a lot easier to see although it would help if **Godwits** could be encouraged to keep both feet firmly on the ground when roosting. In recent years **Godwits** have been flagged from Siberia south along the migration route in eastern Asia to their wintering grounds in Australia and New Zealand. Flag colours from overseas are:

• Orange	Victoria, Australia
• Green	Queensland, Australia
• Orange/Yellow	South Australia
• Yellow/Orange	Southwest Australia
• Yellow	Northwest Australia

- |                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| • Blue         | Northern Japan               |
| • Blue/White   | Tokyo Bay, Japan             |
| • Green/Orange | Yalu Jiang, China            |
| • White/Black  | Chongming, China             |
| • White/Orange | South Korea                  |
| • Yellow/black | Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia. |



**Godwits** have also been banded this year in Invercargill and Christchurch so it is well worth having a good look at any birds you see, especially over the next month or so as they prepare to return north and may be moving around a bit. We would like to carry out another survey, this time on Saturday, 5th March '05 when the high tide in Dunedin is at 12.15 hrs. Could those interested please contact me on 482 2303 or email [derekonley@yahoo.com](mailto:derekonley@yahoo.com). Thanks to Richard Schofield, Alan & Connie Wright and Peter Schweigman.

Derek Onley

### **Pelagic Trip, 11 March 2005**

I am trying to organise a pelagic birdwatching trip on Friday, 11 March. We plan to go to the edge of the continental shelf off Cape Saunders and so should see birds that are not often seen closer in. The cost should be in the range of \$60-\$80 for a 6-hour trip starting from Deborah Bay at 6.30 a.m. At this stage I am just trying to find out how many people are interested. If you are, please let me know as soon as possible (Email: [h.spencer@otago.ac.nz](mailto:h.spencer@otago.ac.nz)). This is not a firm commitment; I'll ask for that nearer the time.

Hamish Spencer

### **Atlas Celebration**

Calling all Atlassers: To celebrate a job well done and have the chance to exchange "The ones that got away" stories, you are all cordially invited to an "End of Atlas Party."

Proposed Venue: Lumberjack Cafe, Owaka

Proposed Time: Lunch on Sunday 6th March 2005

A convivial time is expected and for the afternoons entertainment either/or looking for **Mohua** in the Wisp or a sea watch from Nugget Point (both options available depending on the day and peoples preferences). All Otago and Southland Atlassers welcome and anyone else that happens to be about!

RSVP by 27 Feb 2005 to Suzanne Schofield, 64 Frances Street, Balclutha.

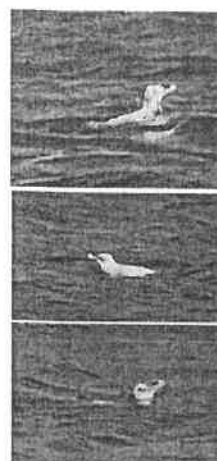
Phone/Fax (03) 418 4415. E-mail: [soozie@pcconnect.co.nz](mailto:soozie@pcconnect.co.nz)

## Ornithological Snippets

Tim Cotter provided this photo of an albino **Blue Penguin** he observed feeding in the Otago Harbour on 31/12/2004. The bird was easy to follow from the coastline because of its white colour underwater. Interestingly, **White-fronted Terns** and **Black-backed Gulls** kept harassing it every time it surfaced.



On 6/2/2005 Derek Onley saw an adult female **Chestnut-breasted Shelduck** on the Warrington Sewage Pond along with 20 or so **Paradise Shelduck**. As he walked past, all but the resident pair of **Paradise Duck** and their 6 young flew off into the fog.



Graeme Loh reports that an English tourist reported a sighting of a small raptor on his way between Kurow and Duntroon on 15/1/2005 just after midday. The tourist described it as small and, having looked at the old field guide, thought it was a **Nankeen Kestrel**. As he was driving along, it was hovering in the wind, but not doing the distinctive kestrel fast-flapping hover. He stopped the car and put his binoculars on it and had a short view of it as it dropped out of view into rank pasture about 15m away. Unfortunately, he was not able to observe it any more as he was not safely parked and had to move on. The man saw mostly the underside and rump, both of which he reported as being white, as was its head. Graeme says he is not completely convinced, knowing **Nankeen Kestrels** well. In particular, the observer did not comment on the bird being colourful, which the **Nankeen Kestrel** is in comparison to NZ raptors. Nevertheless, there might be something odd out there!

Derek Onley found an immature **Fiordland Crested Penguin** at Aramoana on 10/2/2005, looking to moult near the pie/coffee cart. He steered it back to sea away from the dogs. Hopefully it moulted in a safer place like the Albatross colony.

On the evening of 29/12/2004 Alan Baker saw a **NZ Falcon** at Shag Point. The following day and on 1/1/2005, he saw a **Pied Shag** at Kakanui, part of a resting group of four shag species; **Pied, Spotted, Black** and **Little**. There are few records of this species in Otago.

On 22/12/2004, at Turner's Creek near Kinloch. Louise Foord stopped beside a derelict farmhouse. She had previously known of a nesting **Falcon** in the area. There were two **Falcons** in a dead tree by the bridge on the roadside, one of which had some food item in its feet. She walked up to the first clearing and sat watching the juvenile **Falcon**, which had flown onto a low branch. She was able to sit very close while it poked its beak into its wing and shoulders. It raised its claws for a

scratch. It watched her and after over 15 minutes it flew to a nearby tree. **Tomtits** and **Robins** were also present.

Peter Schweigman received a message that there was a **Black Stilt** at the Brighton beach on 29/12/2004. This was followed up and one totally black one turned up on 22/1/2005, again on the beach.



In Waipori Gorge on 30/1/2005, Derek Onley heard and got a fleeting glimpse of a native parakeet. It sounded like a **Yellow-crowned** and he got the impression it was too small for **Red-crowned** but he saw it only briefly in flight as it shot off downstream.

On 3/2/2005, from the wharf at Port Chalmers, Louise Foord saw **Welcome Swallows**, which nest under the wharf, **Black-billed Gulls**, a dark **Stewart Island Shag** and, most exciting to her, a **Little Blue Penguin** swimming about.

Wendy Hare, Suzanne Schofield and Richard Schofield came across a pair of **Cirl Buntings** in Cromwell on 21/1/2005. They were alongside the river/lake between the Junction lookout and the Old Town. They hadn't previously heard any reports from this part of the country.

### Programme 2005

- |                        |   |                          |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Wednesday, 23 February | Indoor Meeting<br>Topic: Estimating Populations of Sooty Shearwaters<br>Using an Infra-red Burrowscope: Do We Really Know What's underground?"<br>8 p.m., Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street | Speaker: Dr Jamie Newman |
| Saturday, 5 March      | Godwit Survey<br>Contact Derek Onley ☎482 2303<br>(derekonley@yahoo.com)  |                          |
| Sunday, 6 March        | Atlas Celebration, noon, Lumberjack Cafe, Owaka<br>Contact Suzanne Schofield ☎(03) 418 4415<br>(soozie@pcconnect.co.nz)   |                          |
| Friday, 11 March       | Pelagic Seabird Trip, 6.30 a.m., Deborah Bay<br>Contact Hamish Spencer ☎479 7981<br>(h.spencer@otago.ac.nz)   |                          |

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