



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

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## *Otago Region Newsletter 3/2005 June 2005*

### **Where have all the Silvereyes gone?**

Macandrew Bay and Broad Bay appear to be lacking their winter visitors, so the report goes from residents Alan Wright of Broad Bay, Nigel MacPherson, who lives adjacent to Colinswood Bush Reserve, Macandrew Bay, and Audrey Eagle also of Macandrew Bay. All three have set up their feeding stations with sugar-water. Alan and Nigel have a number of **Bellbird** and **Tui** visiting their feeding tables regularly. A **Tui** is a rare visitor to Audrey's garden. Both Alan and Audrey have two or three **Silvereyes** flitting around and finding sufficient wild food to meet their needs. Nigel reports seeing none at present.



Alan and Audrey have both noticed that there were numerous **Blackbirds** around in the summer. Then they all disappeared for about two months in the autumn and just the odd one or two are back now.

Audrey Eagle

### **The Green Island Royal Spoonbills**

The breeding season is over and the **Spoonbills** are on their migration from Green Island to warmer areas, mainly the North Island, especially the Far North, like Whangarei and Parengarenga harbours. Thanks again to the Brighton Surf Life Saving Club we, Ilka Söhle and myself, managed to get to the island twice. The first visit was on 22 January 2005, coinciding nicely with last year's visit on 24 January '04. It gave us a good comparison.

The population of breeding adults and non breeders was assessed at over 140 birds this time, higher than last, although this number is hard to estimate as soon as those birds are on the wing. They keep on circling the island and are difficult to count.



It appears the breeding season this past year was very successful, despite a hiccup in December with a bitterly cold spell and another one in January. On 22 January we counted a total of 28 active nests and 8 empty ones. A year ago, 24 January 2004, we counted 19 empty nests and 15 active. And one nest had 2 dead chicks. This year's breeding was obviously later than last year.

The second visit this year was on 13 February and we counted 37 active nests, 8 empty and 8 nests with the sad figure of 27 dead chicks. Most of these were found on the eastern side of the island, well away from the sun most of the day. And with a very nasty cold spell at the end of January, a lot of those chicks didn't make it.

We still managed to band the odd chick and I was very happy to get a report from Raglan where one of these now juveniles was sighted at the Raglan River on 19 May 2005. Not bad for this junior to grow to fledgling status and still manage to fly 1500 km to Raglan, all in just over two months.

I am awaiting the next breeding season to do some more work on these **Spoonbills**. Lets hope the weather is going to be nice without these high winds which prevents us to get the island.

Peter Schweigman

## A Boat Trip on Pelorus Sound

Last month, in the May school holidays, Abby, Ned, David and I took the mail boat trip on Pelorus Sound. On different days of the week, the boat does a slightly different trip, and we picked a Friday so that we would get as close as possible to the open sea. Of course, I had an ulterior motive: to see my first **King Shags**. I spoke to the skipper as we left Havelock, and he said we could make a slight detour to see them. He was as good as his word and we had a great view of one of the two places they nest in the world, Duffers Reef. This rock is by no means large, so it is no surprise that this shag is one of the world's rarest. I confess I did see two before we got to the Reef, sitting on floats associated with the numerous mussel farms in the Sound, and one flying past. The flying bird had that characteristic pot-bellied look of its close relative, our local **Stewart Island Shag**.



We also saw several small flocks of **Fluttering Shearwaters**, as well as the largest number of **Little Blue Penguins** I've seen in one day at sea, 35. The commonest shag was the **Spotted**, but there were also good numbers of Little and a few **Black Shags** as well. I had hoped for a few other seabirds, but apart from **White-fronted**, **Black-fronted** and **Caspian Terns**, and **Black-backed** and **Red-billed Gulls**, there were none.

Hamish Spencer

### Programme 2005

Please note that the June meeting is a week later than previously advertised!

Wednesday, 29 June	Indoor Meeting	Speaker: Dr Suzanne Bassett
	Topic: Kiwi Conservation: What the North Island can Teach the South	
	8 p.m., Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street	

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### Cattle Egret News:

On May 29th, 20 cattle Egret were seen on farmland between Marshall Rd West and the Berwick - Henley Road.

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