



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

PO Box 12397
WELLINGTON

Frank Austin
Regional Recorder
8 Dunblane St
Maori Hill
Dunedin
Phone (03) 467-5214

Louise Foord
Regional Representative
P.O. Box 12002
Maori Hill
Dunedin
Phone (03) 467 5041
Fax (03) 467 5071

Otago Region Newsletter 2/2006 April 2006

Regional Representative

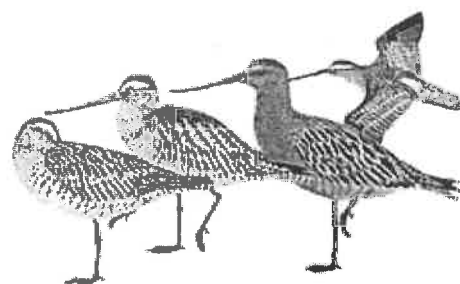
Because of other commitments, this is to inform you of my intention to relinquish the position of Regional Representative of the Otago Region, to take effect as soon as a replacement has been found, hopefully at the next indoor meeting, 26 April 2006. Nominations are hereby called for to fill this vacancy.

Louise Foord

Goodbye to the Godwits.

The godwits are on the move! The majority of the Otago visitors are heading back to Alaska, witnessed during March at the various locations where these over-summering Arctic guests slowly disappeared.

At Karitane, with a summer population of about 150, the number went down to 126. That was early March. No banded ones. Blueskin Bay went down from over 500 to a meagre 150. And there were two banded ones, one adult, one juvenile, both banded at Warrington beach late February.



Hoopers Inlet, that difficult area to spot godwits with bands/flags, had the low number of 106. Only 39 were close enough to check for bands and the only one with bands refused to show the left leg, but was most likely a "Warrington" bird.

Aramoana was checked a few times this month. During the sea week celebrations we managed to count 331 godwits in a very cold, strong southerly wind. All godwits sheltered on the leeward side of the salicornia. There was just no chance checking the legs. That was done a few days later in better conditions. The numbers had gone

down, only 231 were counted, but in amongst them 9 banded birds were identified, 2 banded ones from Awarua Bay, Southland and the rest were banded at Warrington. A week later the total had gone down to 75, with just two banded birds in amongst them.

Since most of these areas hold some over wintering godwits, it might pay to keep checking for bands/flags. And we still have another year to assist in banding more of these godwits, hopefully in September this year and February next year. You will be reminded in good time.

Peter Schweigman

Annual Mason Bay Visit

Is anyone interested in a weekend at Mason Bay on Stewart Island, 5-7 May? The planned schedule is:

Friday, 5 May: Ferry to Halfmoon Bay, staying at Shearwater Inn overnight.

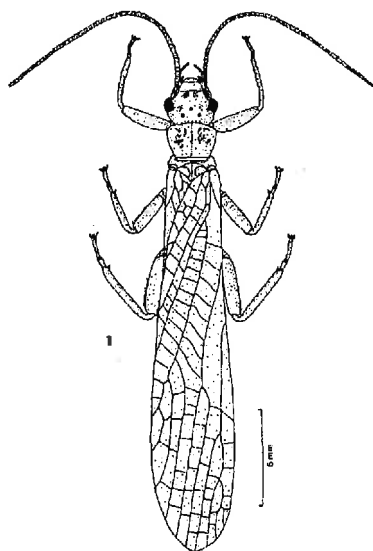
Saturday, 6 May: 8 a.m. water taxi to Freshwater then walk through to Mason Bay. Do the north end of the beach. Stay night at Mason Bay Hut.

Sunday, 7 May: Do the south end of the beach down to the Gutter. 4 p.m. plane off the beach back to Invercargill

I'd like to go with at least three other people to make the trip worthwhile. Any takers? Please let me know as soon as possible.

Lloyd Esler ☎ (03) 213 0404; Email: esler@southnet.co.nz

Fantail Eats Large Stonefly



On Wednesday the 7 December 2005 while I was on school camp I was helping to supervise a group of children swimming in the middle branch of the Wainakarua River at Camp Iona, near Herbert.

The day was fine, calm and hot. I was sitting on a large rock in the middle of the stream when I noticed a stonefly, *Sternoperla* rising from the waters surface. *Sternoperla* are a large distinctive insect seen on many Otago streams. Their body length is between 5 and 7 cm. When flying their wings spread about 3 cm from each side of the thorax. So even though I did not have it in hand there was no mistaking it.

The stonefly was about 3 m above the water when from behind me a **Fantail** appeared and seized the mayfly without stopping. I'm not unused to seeing **Fantails** feed and have often wished that there were more of them

around when sandflies are present. I've also seen them eat crane flies, but this is the first time that I've seen a **Fantail** take on such a proportionately large insect. However, the **Fantail** didn't seem to be too perturbed about this as it did not have any trouble in seizing the stonefly and eating it without landing.

Bruce McKinlay

Ornithological Snippets

Chuck and Carol Landis report a **Reef Heron** fishing from the rocks at Butterfly Bay, Karitane on 8 March 2005, a first for them. Alan Baker also saw a **Reef Heron** at Shag Point on 25 February 2006. He reports seeing 2 **Fernbirds** there on 11 February 2006, and a lone **Pied Shag** at Kakanui on 26 March 2006.



Chuck and Carol have also seen large numbers of birds feeding in the old kanukas in their garden at the James Powell Convalescent Home during mid-February. The birds appeared as a large, noisy, mixed flock (or more likely, flocks) – **Brown Creepers** and **Silvereyes** (more than 10 of each) along with abundant **Fantails**, **Grey Warblers**, **Bellbirds**, a pair of **Tomtits**, and, for a couple days, 3 **Riflemen**. Presumably an insect hatching brought them in. On 15 March the **Brown Creepers** and **Silvereyes** were still there, but in small numbers, along with 6 **Fantails**, **Grey Warblers**, **Bellbirds**, and a pair of **Tomtits**, but the **Riflemen** were gone.



Programme 2006

Indoor Meetings will be held in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street at 8 p.m. Please be on time: the door will be locked after 8 p.m.

Wednesday, 26 April

Indoor Meeting

Speaker: Catherine Grueber

Topic: Genetic diversity of Takahe: What is it and why is it important?

Sunday, 4 June

Winter Wader Count Aramoana High Tide 9.27 a.m.

Backup Date: 18 June High Tide 8.23 a.m.

Contact: Ken Gager, ☎487 6670

Newsletter Editor: Hamish Spencer, 50 Grey Street, NEV, Dunedin.
hgs Spencer@xtra.co.nz



B & D McKinlay
97 Tomahawk Rd
Andersons Bay