



Birds New Zealand
PO Box 834, Nelson 7040
<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz>

Regional Representative: Dawn Palmer
467 Frankton Road Queenstown 9300
birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz 0274427348

Regional Recorder: Richard Schofield
64 Frances Street, Balclutha 9230
cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Otago Region Newsletter 11/2025

November 2025



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

Ornithological Snippets

The long-staying Mute Swan|Wāna on Lake Waihora was resighted on 19 November. Chukar were seen at The Remarkables on 31 October and on Coronet Peak Road on 13 November. Marsh Crake|Kotoreke were reported from Butterfields Wetland, Lake Hawea on 25 October, at Shotover Wetland on 26 and 27 October, 13 November, and at Moke Lake on 11 November.

Australasian Little Grebe|Tokitokipio were at Glenorchy Lagoon on 18 th October and Diamond Lake on 25 th October.

Little Black Shag|Kawau tūi continue to be seen, with birds at Kakanui 8 November, and two near Portobello on 19 November. An inland Pied Shag|Kāruhiruhi was at Lake Dunstan 25 October, with another at Diamond Lake on 25 October. Reef Heron|Matuku moana was seen at Taiaroa Head on 3 November, and Nugget Point on 13, while the White Heron|Kōtuku was at Glenorchy on 3 November, with two there on 9 November.

Finally Kaka|Kākā were still near Balclutha on 30 October, at Pounaweia on 13 November, and two were at Awakiki, near Balclutha, on 18 November.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

The 2025 eBird Taxonomy Update is now complete. If you are subscribed to ebird notifications, you should have received an invitation to download a Personalised eBird Taxonomy Update Report.

Changes relevant to New Zealand include the splitting of Whimbrel into Eurasian and Hudsonian, and Eastern and Western Rockhopper Penguin are now classed as separate species.

For those of you who use Merlin to make audio recordings, there has been a slight change in that recording are now not automatically saved, and you have to save them manually after each recording, and before closing the app. Just click the “Save” tab in the upper right hand corner.

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@birdsNZ.org.nz 027 442 7348



Accommodation

The conference will be held at the Lake Wānaka Centre.

Venue location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/HHDjFj6GB4c4WVXw7>

About the venue: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/venues/lake-wanaka-centre/>

Wānaka isite has secured a selection of accommodation options for our members that are currently on hold for us. This includes the entire accommodation capacity at the Wanaka Hotel, next door to the conference venue. Their reservations cover the period 28 May 2026 to 2 June 2026 (5 nights).

Other accommodation options secured for BirdsNZ members attending the Conference include:

- Wanaka Luxury Apartments
- Oakridge Resort Wanaka
- Alpine Resort Wanaka - Managed by THC Hotels & Resorts

To secure your accommodation booking, please email hello@wanaka.co.nz or call them at (+64) 03 443 1233 (available 9 AM – 5 PM daily) and let them know you are booking for the **BirdsNZ 2026 Conference**.

A deposit of one night's accommodation is required immediately after the Wānaka isite confirms your booking.

Wanaka isite Accommodation Cancellation Policy:

- 90% refund of deposit available until 28 February 2026
- Full payment due: 1 March 2026
- 90% refund of full payment available until 24 April 2026
- No refunds after: 25 April 2026

A grebe with a teenager on board

Photo Credit: John Darby [wanakaapp.nz](https://www.wanakaapp.nz)



Notes from the RR & Inland Birding

Conference 2026 - The Conference Registration Form is nearly complete and will be available on-line soon.

Thanks to the fantastic team work of the Conference Committee for getting us to this point.

The Matuku Muster effort was increased in Otago this year with the continuing efforts of Franny and Catriona in the Catlins and the support of Wai Wanaka volunteers in Wanaka who sent four people out into the dusk, the Whakatipu Wildlife Trust who coordinated 13 volunteers and the Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust who had 8 people out listening. No bittern were heard in the Whakatipu, but two question marks were laid over unconfirmed detections at the Glendhu Wetland and The Neck. I ran an in-person and on-line training session to support this effort and local birders reported enjoying the evening listening. Wendy Ambury (Love Bittern) paid a visit to some of these community groups while she was passing through sharing her inspiring love of bittern. If members find their way to those areas, you're encouraged to have a listen. It's also worth a listen at the Butterfield Wetland check for Spotless and Marsh Crake.

As this year draws to a close, I hope you can all reflect on a year well lived and that you have some good birding to look forward to over the summer.

Braided River birds have had variable river conditions to contend with, as is usual for spring; the Lower Shotover colonies of black-fronted tern, black-billed gulls and banded dotterel appear to be settled into the breeding season now though.

Happy birding,
Dawn Palmer

Updates and Messages from the Regional Representative

Newsletters:

Waikato – November 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Waikato-2511.pdf>

Pages:

RR page with useful links: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/about-us/manual/rr-page/>

2026 NZ Bird Conference: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/nz-bird-conference-2026/>

2025 AGM Minutes:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-AGM-Minutes.pdf>

PIBCRF – Guidelines: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/about-us/manual/guidelines/>

Articles:

BNZRF 2024 – Long-tailed cuckoo: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2024-BNZRF-Long-tailed-cuckoo-movement-Summary-article-2509.pdf>

PAF 2024 - National Royal Spoonbill Census: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2024-PAF-National-Spoonbill-Census-Summary-Report-2510.pdf>

Otago Harbour Survey: October 2025 Update

Thanks everybody. It looks like the October count went well for everybody.

Here is a summary table which includes everything that was counted. If it's not correct for your section let me know.

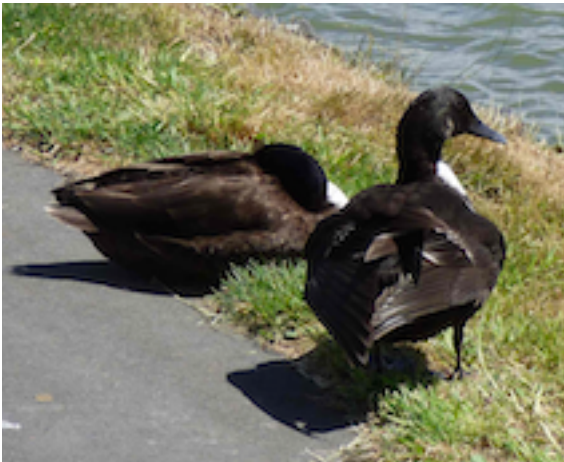
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Grand Total
Bar-tailed godwit	0	0	0	0	0	0	407	407
black swan	0	0	1	0	26	94	107	228
Black-backed gull	56	5	23	16	138	33	31	302
black-billed gull	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
Canada goose	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	7
greylag goose	0	1	5	0	4	0	0	10
kingfisher	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	4
little penguin	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
little shag	17	22	29	109	29	118	19	343
mallard	2					13		15
Mallard/grey hybrid	3	26	3	15	15	7	7	76
paradise shelduck	10	0	7	30	22	5	3	77
pieb stilt	0	0	0	1	0	0	8	9
pukeko	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Red-billed gull	91	118	948	275	91	414	19	1956
royal spoonbill	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
shoveler	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
SI Pied Oystercatcher	0	2	4	0	59	4	52	121
small gull	0	0	0	0	144	0	0	144
spotted shag	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
Spur-winged plover	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	4
variable oystercatcher	0	1	4	4	4	27	13	53
welcome swallow	1	0	0	0	3	0	2	6
White-faced heron	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	6
white-fronted tern	1	0	3	10	0	80	0	94

A couple of sections continued with recording mallards; without any justifying notes. I would appreciate it if those who have seen a mallard can provide any context. Nice to see the Kingfishers.

Thanks for the efforts to keep the numbers of small gulls to a minimum and taking the time to look for red-billed gull.

I've already written to you all about the November Survey. Still sorting this out.

Bruce



Mallard cross with domestic duck



Mallard domestic duck hybrids

Photos provided Lala Frazer

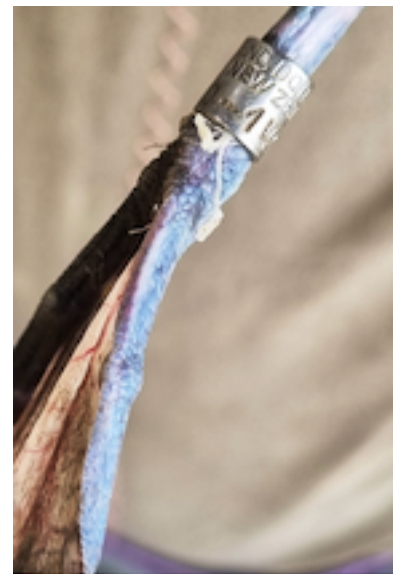
Trematode remains on prion foot

Pictures of the trematode remains on fairy prion D144901 taken 12th November 2025 at the prion ledge on the St Clair cliffs, Dunedin.



This is a 25year old adult bird incubating an egg in box L6, the first prion I ever banded in January 2000.

The trematode material was successfully removed.

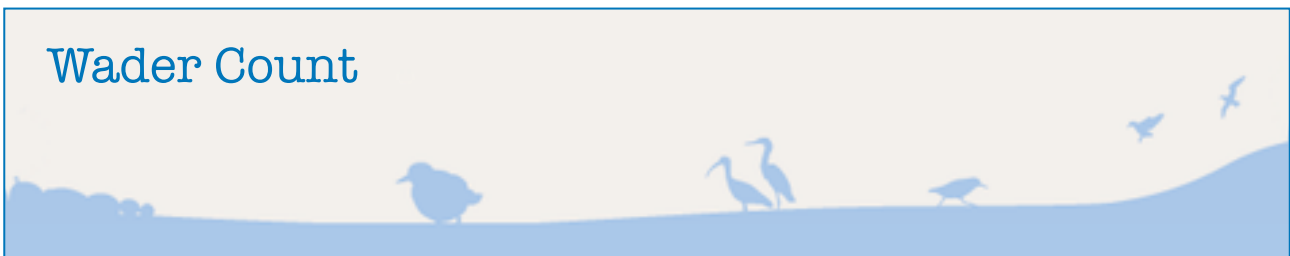




Here is a link to the video about the trematode anklets

<https://youtu.be/EAt9cONTD88?si=kzTcT3ocEpnX6P4Z>

Graeme Loh
0211322436



Volunteers wanted for a summer wader count on **Sunday November 30th.**

High tide (1.89M) at Dunedin is at 12.28pm

Reserve day is Sunday 14 December. High tide (1.88M) at Dunedin is at 12.55pm.

All members and interested parties are welcome to participate.

Please contact Maree Johnstone email mareej@kinect.co.nz or phone 027 6609446 to be assigned to a team.



Sipo and newly born chicks
taken Sunday, 16 November,
at Karitane river

Photo Credit: Martine Darrou



Pigeon and chick

Photo Credit: Martine Darrou

Dunedin Town Belt Bird Trail



Are you:

- Looking for a walk in the City?
- Wanting to see some birds which are common or not in the City?
- Wanting to upskill your technique on identifying and counting birds?
- Wanting to get in touch with nature?
- All of the above?

For more information go to www.birdcount.nz

Are you looking for a special gift to give this Christmas?



You can gift someone an annual **Birds New Zealand** subscription for just \$1.75 a week to help foster a lifetime appreciation of birds.

Just choose a [subscription plan](#) and send an email to membership@birdsNZ.org.nz and we will advise how to make the payment. We will then send you the Gift Voucher.

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.

Birds NZ Otago Monthly Meeting Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83922655184>
Meeting ID: 839 2265 5184 Passcode: 633186

Tuesday 25 November Annual Quiz Night!

Sunday 21 December Bruce - Harbour Survey

Contributions for the next newsletter should reach the editor,
sodlin@gmail.com by **20 January 2026**



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