

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter October 2025

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[https://www.birdoftheyear.org.nz/static/b958704b2b48dec9846cded5c186fb64/b64f3/Untitled%20design%20\(2\).avif](https://www.birdoftheyear.org.nz/static/b958704b2b48dec9846cded5c186fb64/b64f3/Untitled%20design%20(2).avif)

From the Regional Representative

The weather has been a bit variable the last month. Our trip to Bushy Park was cancelled because the weather forecast said it would be rain and high wind. I don't think it turned out to be as bad as forecasted, but I had to make a decision and cancelled it.

I have then decided that our October big day trip on Saturday 11 October 2025 will include Bushy Park as part of the trip (see later in the newsletter).

The migratory birds are returning to New Zealand. I heard my first Shining Cuckoo Monday the 22nd September in our garden (up Kahuterawa Rd) and later on the 27th September in The Esplanade.

We are planning a pelagic trip from Petone into Cook Strait Saturday 24 January 2026. We need to find out if there are enough people interested in the trip. We need 20 participants to keep the price to \$120 per person. Please register your interest to me on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com (See later in the newsletter).

Note our October meeting is on Wednesday 15th October, the third Wednesday of the month.

Please send me photos and notes about your bird adventures and sightings or other bird news for the next newsletter, on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com.

Deadline for the November issue is 25th October 2025.

Last meeting

Sixteen people turned up at the last meeting to hear Liam Urquhart's talk about "Studying Brown Kiwi vocal behaviours and anatomy". Liam had studied in detail the anatomy of the female and male Kiwi vocal tract. In short, he found that the vocal tract was very different between the male and the female. He also studied the calls in the wild. It was quite a large study for a Masters thesis. Well done Liam.



Regional bird news

Welcome to the birds at Foxton.

Paul Gibson went to the Welcome to the birds at Foxton Beach Saturday 27th September and sent a few photos. There was no wind and no rain, so a great day, weather wise.



Australasian Bittern at Pukepuke

Chris Tuffley, Stephen Legg and I (Kirsten Olsen) went to Pukepuke Sunday 28th September to identify our listening stations for next weekend's "The Great Matuku-Hurepo Muster". We went all the way around the lake on the tracks and decided on three stations. At one point Stephen and I were near the track to the bird hide while Chris had gone to check a hunting shelter out. Stephen and I looked up and saw two Australasian Bitterns flying low over the Raupo. We thought that Chris might have spooked them. Unfortunately, Chris did not see them. It is very promising for our survey next weekend (3rd, 4th and 5th October) (see trip report on ebird:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/416419>)

The next dates for the Muster are the 7th, 8th and 9th November. We are looking for two to three people to do the survey at lake Omanu. If you can help with this on the dates, please contact me on: kirsten.b.Olsen@gmail.com



Australasian bittern | Matuku-hūrepo. Adult preparing to fly. Foxton Beach, April 2017.
Image © imogenwarrenphotography.net by Imogen Warren. Source NZ birds online

Upcoming meetings

The next Birds New Zealand Manawatū meeting is on **15th October 2025 at 7:15pm in Val Kenward Room at the Palmerston North Community Leisure Centre, 569 Ferguson Street.**

The meetings start with a short introduction that includes updates on regional bird sighting and notices. At the end of the meeting there is the opportunity for all to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

The speaker: **Oscar Thomas.**

The topic is: **Western Pacific Odyssey:
Long-tailed Mynas and Short-tailed Albatrosses**



Every year, Heritage Expeditions runs a Western Pacific Odyssey voyage. In 2025 it spanned 25 days from Auckland, New Zealand to Osaka, Japan stopping at five countries en route via the Heritage Adventurer, with almost 100 passengers on board. This epic journey has developed a reputation over the years as one of the world's 'Ultimate Pelagics', discovering mythical seabirds such as the New Caledonian Storm Petrel and Lava Petrel. Oscar will share his experiences as a bird guide onboard, and photos of the diverse range of wildlife encountered.

Oscar Thomas spent his school years volunteering for conservation organizations, advocating for taonga wildlife, and travelling in search of as many birds as he could observe and photograph. These interests began on a visit to Tiritiri Matangi Island Sanctuary at age 10, where he soon became a volunteer guide. At age 18 he wrote 'The Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of New Zealand' to bring photography and birding together. Oscar is now at the University of Otago working towards a Master of Science in Ecology. He works part-time as a wildlife guide onboard ships for Heritage Expeditions and Coral Expeditions.

Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

12th November Phil Battley: Wader identification. And planning of next years programme (meetings and trips)

Upcoming trips and events

October big day Saturday 11 October 2025

Wherever you are on **11 October**, take a few minutes to enjoy birds and share what you find on eBird. By taking part in October Big Day you're also celebrating [Global Bird Weekend](#) and [World Migratory Bird Day](#).



Kirsten Olsen is organising a branch trip on Saturday 11 Oct. My current idea is to start early from Palmerston North, drive to Whangaehu Beach road to see if the Cattle Egrets are there (they haven't been reported this year on eBird yet). Then drive to Bushy Park and spend some time looking at the bush birds. Thereafter drive to Upokongaro to see if we can spot one or two Nankeen Night Herons. If you are interested in participating, contact Kirsten as soon as possible, so we can plan the day, or half the day, together. Contact Kirsten on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com.

Summer/spring Wader count

This year the summer/spring wader count will be Saturday the **22nd November with Sunday the 23rd November** as a back up if the weather plays up. Phil Battley is coordinating the wader count, so if you are interested in taking part, please contact Phil on p.battley@massey.ac.nz.

Seabirding on Cook Strait Saturday 24th January 2026

We are organising a pelagic trip from Petone into Cook Strait Saturday 24 January 2026. The boat will leave Petone 7am and be back 1pm. If leaving from Palmerston North the same morning you would have to leave by 5am. The boat is a fishing boat and it will have fish scrap to attract the birds. (Phil Battley uses this boat to take his students on pelagic trips).

The boat costs \$2400 and it takes 20 people, so the cost per person is @120, if we fill the boat. We need you to indicate if you are interested in coming on this fantastic pelagic.

Please email Kirsten Olsen if you are interested in going on this trip:

kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com



Source: <https://kahunz.co.nz/koken/albums/cook-strait-pelagic-photographic-trip/content/ab13-1/>

Links to other regions' newsletters and other material

Newsletters

Canterbury – August 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/canterbury-newsletter-wrybill/>

South Auckland – August 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/>

Nelson – August 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/nelson-newsletter/>

Otago – August 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/otago-newsletter/>

Other material:

Nikki McArthur has summarized The findings from the survey of the Manawatu and Whanganui rivers in an article: **Manawatū-Whanganui rivers support internationally significant shorebird populations** available on: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2024-BNZRF-Manawatu-riverbird-shorebird-census-Summary-Article-2508.pdf>

September Notornis release:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/notornis-latest-edition-published/>

Notices

13th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC)

BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand are excited to announce the **13th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC)** will be held in **Perth/Boorloo**.

The AOC will be held from **Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 November 2025** at the University of Western Australia, with side events planned for the days before and after. The AOC is the primary conference for BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand. The largest biennial gathering of amateur and professional ornithologists and avian researchers from Australasia. Key dates will be available soon. Sign up for email updates at <https://birdlife.org.au/events/australasian-ornithological-conference-2025/>

Registration opened 5 May. Early bird registration closed 30 September. For more details visit <https://aoc.org.au/>

Health and safety

Please, if you have any incident that could have resulted in injury or results in injury while participating in Birds New Zealand activity, report it to the Regional Representative. In Manawatū it is Kirsten Olsen, email birds.manawatu@birdsnz.org.nz or phone 027 354 6010

Health and safety of Birds New Zealand's members when they participate in Birds NZ organised activity, like meetings, collection of data and fieldtrips, is important to the Council. The [Health and Safety Policy](#) can be found on Birds NZ webpage. Press [Here](#) to get to the policy.

To make it more practicable, the Council has developed [health and safety guidelines for field trips](#) that also can be found on the website.

The guidelines state: *"At a health and safety briefing before a field trip commences the trip leader will describe the route, any specific or potential physical difficulties that might be encountered, and the approximate times for lunch, tea breaks and the end of the trip."* (...)

"If a member has an allergy or medical condition, they should bring their own anti-histamines and personal medications. The trip leader should be advised of medical problems a member has and how to deal with them. Bring a mobile phone and share phone numbers with others. Don't hesitate to call 111 for any incidents involving injury." (...) *"The trip leader should check the weather forecast for the day and, if necessary, monitor the weather conditions during the trip. Turn back if the weather deteriorates. Each member should bring sufficient food and drinking water for their personal needs."*

Photo by Chris Tuffley



Contribution to future Birds NZ Manawatu newsletters

Please send photos and text that would be appropriate for this newsletter, to Kirsten Olsen kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com .

Deadline for November 2025 issue: 25 October 2025

Please send your contributions to: kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com

Contacts in Birds New Zealand Manawatū Branch:

Regional representative: Kirsten Olsen

email: birds.manawatu@birdsNZ.org.nz

Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

email: iolaandneill@inspire.net.nz

Please report interesting bird sightings to Neill

Wader count coordinator: Phil Battley

email: p.battley@massey.ac.nz

BIRDS | SCIENCE | PEOPLE



Kākāpō need all the help they can get. That's why our Research Fund has helped to fund 4 research projects on Kākāpō egg viability, genomics and portable DNA sequencing since 2016 to inform evidence-based conservation.

**You can join Birds New Zealand for just \$1.75 a week.
That's \$90 a year, and just \$45 for students.**

www.birdsNZ.org.nz

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