



# OSNZ news

No. 29 December, 1983

NOTE: Deadline for the March issue will be 10th February.

## Totorore Expedition

Following close on a wonderful farewell from Kerikeri, a small gathering saw S.R.V. *Totorore* on her way from Auckland on 26/2/83, at the start of her 2½ year round-the-world expedition studying seabirds in the Southern Oceans and islands.

The highlight of the 9 day passage to the Chatham Islands was the probable sighting of a Taiko. David Crockett is corresponding with Gerry Clark over this and tells us that the only other person to sight the Taiko at sea is Sir Peter Scott. This was 2 years ago and in an almost identical location, 90km north of Kaingaroa. During the passage to the Chathams the boat also proved herself in her first Force 10 gale.

*Totorore* left the Chathams for Valparaiso on 23/3/83. Favourable weather during the first fortnight of the Southern Ocean crossing gave way to adverse winds, during which they sailed down to the Antarctic Convergence. Trouble with the electrics made it necessary, among other things, to hand start the engine daily in temperatures down to 4°C. The Juan Fernandez Islands were reached in 45 days, a little ahead of schedule.

After unloading stores at Masatierra, and leaving Mike Hurst in charge, *Totorore* proceeded to Valparaiso. Returning to the Juan Fernandez Islands to begin survey work, a party, including Dr W. R. P. Bourne, spent a week ashore on the rugged Masafuera. Here they camped in the clouds at 1800m and were well satisfied with their results. We look forward with great interest to hearing what these results were but we do know that a small passerine, not seen since 1928, was one of the finds.

Landings were also made on Santa Clara and several smaller rocky islets. The weather conditions in the 'Robinson Crusoe Islands' were far from ideal and two hefty anchors were bent.

Consequently Gerry spent most of his time sailing off and on while the others were ashore.

Since returning to Valparaiso they have sailed south, doing transects across the Humbolt Current and photographing waders during visits to the port. In late August they were to call at Puerto Montt before heading further south.

The research programme of the team aboard *Totorore* includes making at least six 10-minute observations of seabirds and associated information daily.

The data will be collated to provide background information on the distribution of many species. The expedition is first making a 12-month study of birds along the outlying islands of the southern coast of Chile. Expedition members to date include: Gerry Clark, Master, Kerikeri — on; Ken Back, Kerikeri-Chathams; Mike Hurst, Chathams-Valparaiso; Bill Bourne and John Atkinson, Valparaiso-Juan Fernandez and return; Jim Watt, Valparaiso-south.

ANTHEA GOODWIN

## The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

### NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the following five Council members retire in May 1984 and nominations are hereby called for, to fill the vacancies created:

Mr B. D. Heather (Editor)  
Mr G. M. H. Peterson (Treasurer)  
Mr R. S. Slack (Secretary)  
Mr R. B. Sibson (Vice-President)  
Mr P. D. Gaze (Council)

The positions of Editor, Treasurer, Secretary and Council member are for three-year terms. The position of Vice-President is for a one-year term only.

Nominations close with the Secretary on 29 February 1984 and must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person nominated, who must also be a financial member of the Society. Please also submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee. Retiring officers are eligible for re-election.

### NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1984 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before 29 February 1984, in writing and signed by the mover and seconder.

The 1984 Annual General Meeting will be held in Nelson on Saturday, 19 May.

R. S. SLACK,  
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

C/- Post Office,  
Pauatahanui,  
Wellington

## OSNZ Rare Bird Recording Scheme

Unusual bird sightings are reviewed at two levels in New Zealand. Records of species of national rarity are examined by the Rare Birds Committee, the members of which have a wide knowledge of field identification. Where sufficient expertise among the Committee members is not available, assistance is sought from authorities both in New Zealand and overseas. Records of species of local rarity are handled by the RRs.

In both instances it is preferred that records are submitted by completing an 'Unusual Bird Report,' which is available from your RR. This form is designed to help an observer submit a complete description, and is constantly evolving and improving.

The completed form should be submitted to your RR, who will pass it on to the Secretary of the Rare Birds Committee immediately if the species concerned is on the national list, or with a recommendation for acceptance or non-acceptance if referring to a locally rare species.

In recent years it is pleasing to note that an increasing number of records submitted have been accepted and this is due largely to an awareness of the need to record a bird's characteristics in detail. Those records not accepted in the past often have been due to the submission of an inadequate description

Records recently reviewed and accepted were:

Common Sandpiper	November 1980	Lake Wainono
Long-tailed Skua	October 1981	Taupo
Grass Whistling-duck (9)	April 1982	Waikato River near Pukekohe
Tree Martin	November 1982	Nelson
Wood Duck	December 1982	Snares Is.
King Penguin	January 1983	Snares Is.
Spine-tailed Swift (2)	January 1983	Snares Is.
Chatham Is. Mollymawk	January 1983	Snares Western Chain
Oriental Dotterel	January 1983	Lake Wainono
Lesser Yellowlegs	February 1983	Hawkes Bay
Nankeen Night Heron	March 1983	Collingwood
Barn Owl (dead)	March 1983	Papatoetoe
Broad-billed Roller	March 1983	Westhaven Inlet
Fork-tailed Swift	May 1983	Te Anau
Kookaburra	June 1983	Rangiora
Fork-tailed Swift (2)	July 1983	Napier
Masked Booby (died)	July 1983	Hamilton

We look forward to receiving records from you.

JOHN FENNELL, *Secretary, Rare Birds Committee*

for the Committee or RR to make a valid judgement.

Remember that your RR and Rare Birds Committee Secretary can be contacted to provide whatever assistance they can with the submission of records. We are here to help. Another important thing is to submit your observation as quickly as possible to your RR. If another observer can visit the location and see the bird in question they may record additional features to assist a positive identification.

The Committee files all records, whether accepted or not accepted, for both national and local level species. It is hoped that over a period of years it will be possible to examine the occurrence of certain species with respect to season and location. This can only be done if records are complete. Where very detailed descriptions are provided, hopefully in the majority of reports, it will be possible to also analyse records with respect to plumage characteristics of rare species occurring in New Zealand.

Therefore these reports are not just a system for judging the validity of sightings but a way of collecting and collating data at a national level which would otherwise only be recorded and dispersed in members' field notebooks.

After detailed consideration, both by the committee and by three overseas authorities, it was decided that the Stint sp. seen near Auckland in January 1983 could not be specifically identified.

## Beach Patrollers

Recently I have been going through the Beach Patrol Card collection in order to summarise some of the information they contain. With regard to Gannet records, I had hoped to show when and where juveniles were found in comparison with similar information for adults. However, for most Gannet records there is no mention of whether the birds recovered were adult or juvenile. Thus my plea is that when specimens of species that have different adult and juvenile plumage are found, the number of each age group be noted on the beach patrol card. Once the present supply of cards has been used, the new cards will be printed with a column for this information.

RALPH POWLESLAND, *Convener*

## Marlborough Sounds bird survey

The Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park Board is starting a 5-year bird survey in the Sounds. This survey is being carried out in conjunction with a scheme that is administered from the Lands & Survey Head Office in Wellington and will become part of the nationwide bird mapping scheme for national parks and reserves.

During the survey we hope to gain a clear indication of the distribution of various species that visit the Sounds and observe any changes in population or distribution.

Anyone interested in participating in the survey should contact either Elaine Murphy (Field Assistant) or Bob Ryan (Ranger), Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park Board, Mahakipawa Road, RD, Havelock, phone Havelock 42-159.  
ELAINE MURPHY

## Rare birds in Australia

Several sightings of interest to OSNZ members were reported in the RAOU Newsletter for June 1983. Most of these involved seabirds, including the first Australian records of a White-necked Petrel — seen off Point Lookout on 20/2/83, and off Sydney on 26/2/83. Other sightings included up to 15 Long-tailed Skuas, 2 Westland Black Petrels, 1 Buller's Shearwater, and a Hutton's Shearwater — all between 16 and 24km offshore and in about 60 fathoms.

Meanwhile back on shore, the reports included up to 59 Oriental Dotterels in Victoria on 19/2/83 and 9 Red-rumped Swallows (first Australian record) in Queensland on 12/2/83.