

# Records Appraisal Committee annual report for 2017

Prepared for OSNZ Council for consideration at the 2018 AGM

## **RAC membership**

Current membership is

- Colin Miskelly (Convener)
- Andrew Crossland
- Ian Saville
- Ian Southey
- Alan Tennyson

Elizabeth (Biz) Bell is the RAC Secretary, and continues to provide timely and efficient administrative support to the panel and submitters.

Former RAC member Paul Sagar is co-opted to the panel to provide independent assessment of Unusual Bird Reports (UBRs) submitted by RAC members. This occurred three times in 2017.

## **RAC processes**

The online UBR reporting system on the OSNZ website is working well, and is the main source of UBRs received.

Receipt of UBRs is acknowledged promptly by the Secretary. Batches of UBRs are sent to the panel every 2 months, and they then have 2 months to provide comment. All panel members reliably kept within deadlines during 2017. Response letters were typically sent out 3-5 months after UBRs were received.

## **UBRs assessed in 2017**

A total of 97 UBRs was received in 2017, and assessed between March 2016 and February 2018. This was a substantial increase on the 60 UBRs received in 2016. Sixty-nine (71%) of the 2017 UBRs were accepted by the committee. Notable records accepted during 2017 included New Zealand's first Cox's sandpiper.

## **UBR database**

The Unusual Bird Report database launched at the 2016 New Zealand Bird Conference in Napier is working well, providing a searchable database of all submissions and decisions dating back to the 1960s. The database includes hyperlinks to publications referring to individual UBRs, and to New Zealand Birds Online species pages.

## **Publication of RAC decisions**

A paper reporting on 139 RAC decisions from 2015-16 was published in *Notornis* during 2017:

Miskelly, C.M.; Crossland, A.C.; Sagar, P.M.; Saville, I.; Tennyson, A.J.D.; Bell, E.A. 2017. Vagrant and extra-limital bird records accepted by the Birds New Zealand Records Appraisal Committee 2015-2016. *Notornis* 64: 57-67.

I thank Biz, Paul and my fellow panel members for their efficient support during 2017.

Colin Miskelly, Convener