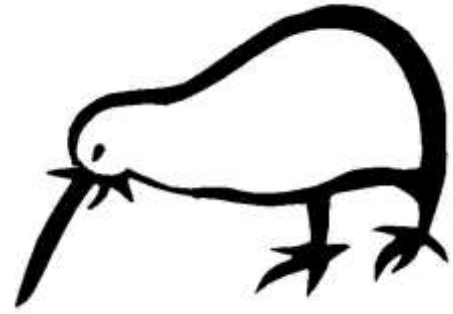


# APTERYX

Issue 31

December 2011



Photos:  
Detlef Davies (DD)  
Diana Galbraith  
Paul Asquith

[www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz)

**NEWSLETTER OF THE FAR NORTH REGION OF THE  
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND**

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A hectic festive season and holiday has caused a delay in the production of this issue of Aptyeryx. Hopefully we have included a variety of ornithological topics for your interest. The latter part of 2011 saw the Society play a major part in the nationwide New Zealand Dotterel Census in October and many of us enjoyed a weekend field meeting on Moturoa Island in December. Part of a shorebird count followed on from Dotterel-counting.

We have not been notified of any new members in our region for a while. Since I am writing this in January, I will remind members that 2012 subscriptions are due and renewal can now be done online – here is the link: <http://osnz.org.nz/membership-fees>. If you get into difficulty please contact Ingrid, the Executive Officer on [eo@osnz.org.nz](mailto:eo@osnz.org.nz) or download the form and send by mail.

Note a small error in the first paragraph of page 5 in the August newsletter – *Waiouru*, not *Waiouku*.

I often circularise news by email such as programme changes, confirmation of times and meeting places of events, etc. If you do not have email, please give me a phone number so I can contact you with this information.



Bar-tailed Godwits at Great Exhibition Bay (DD)

## The Far North Regional Officers are:

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## RECENT EVENTS

### 16<sup>th</sup> September – the Seychelles

Robin Booth gave us an illustrated talk on his and Verna's holiday in the Seychelles which included some great video with accompanying music on some of the special birds and other aspects of their trip.

### October

Many days this month were spent Dotterel-counting – see report on page 5.



White Terns – a familiar bird of the Seychelles  
(photo from Norfolk Island – DD)

### 9<sup>th</sup> December – Barbecue and Lecture

A barbecue at the Davies home was followed by a lecture by CJ Ralph on the subject "E-bird New Zealand – what is in store?". What seemed daunting at first has now become clearer and some Far North members are using this method of bird recording.

### 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> December – Bird Monitoring on Moturoa Island

12 of us spent a great weekend on the island exploring and bird-monitoring under the guidance of our resident hosts, CJ and Carol Ralph. More details on page 7.

## RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Detlef Davies & Laureen Alston

These cover the period from mid-August to the end of the year. Contributors: Detlef & Carol Davies (DCD), Laureen Alston (LMA), Anthea Goodwin (AG), Kevin Matthews (KM), Isabella & Derry Godbert (IDG), Alison Stanes, Gerald Messenger, Theresa Vucich, Colin & June Salt, Bill Campbell, Tom & Margaret Pasco, Gery Shore, Tim Robinson.

**North Island Brown Kiwi** - Calling in Doves Bay area and Awa-awa-roa cove (Moturoa Is) 3 and 4 Dec (LMA); some sightings on Purerua and on Moturoa Island.

**Albatross sp.** – distant one off Spirits Bay on 22 Oct.

Also off Spirits Bay on 22 Oct: **Flesh-footed Shearwater** (c.20), **Buller's Shearwater** (c.10), **Sooty Shearwater** (c.20), **Little Shearwater** (1), **Diving Petrel sp.** (c.20)



Diving Petrel sp. Campbell Is area (DD)

**Fluttering Shearwater** – 11 off Great Exhibition Bay, 23 Oct (DD)

**Cape Petrel** – Late report of one off Fairway Reef, Doubtless Bay on 11 March 2011 (Gerald Messenger)

**Black-winged Petrel** – 12 in-shore off Spirits Bay on 22 Oct (DD)

**Grey-faced Petrel** – 4 well-grown chicks in burrows on Moturoa Island 17 Dec (field trip).

**Little Penguin** – a pair & 2 chicks in a burrow on Purerua

monitored by CD, chicks left burrow c.7 Dec.

**Australasian Gannet** - One preening amongst decoys at the Gannet Project on Alcatraz, Moturoa Is. on 18 Dec, seen by members of OSNZ (see page 7)

**Pied Shags** - up to 24 in colony on Urupukapuka Island 23 Oct including 4 young (LMA)

**Reef Heron** - 1 Te Haumi 30 Sept, 1 Tauranga Bay & 1 Mahinepua, 11 Oct

**Cattle Egret** - Flock of 103 on the Camp Road paddock at Waiharara on 13 Sept (KM).

**Royal Spoonbill** - 20 Pupuke middle of last year; 120 Unahi Road 22 Sept, 260 Te Hapua same day, up to 4 Waitangi Estuary (DCD, TMP); 5 Mangonui Harbour & 1 Whangaroa Harbour in Aug/Sept (Bill Campbell, Gery Shore)

**Brown Teal** - Hybrid with Grey Duck on Moturoa Island.



**Grey-faced Petrel chick - Moturoa Is, Diana Galbraith**



**Brown Teal X Grey Duck hybrid - Moturoa Is, Diana Galbraith**

**Variable Oystercatcher** - Many records and counts during Dotterel census. Evidence of breeding in many places including Otehei Bay, Urupukapuka Is, beach west of Waipiro Bay, Kowhai Beach, 5 pairs all with chicks on Motumaire Is (Paihia). Over 40 on Kokota Sandspit 13 Nov. Pied Oystercatchers in much lower numbers over the period.

**Pied Stilt** - 95 in paddocks in Pupuke Road 6 Feb 2011; 50+ Paua 13 Nov.

**New Zealand Dotterel** - see census results on page 5.

**Banded Dotterel** 6 in wader flock at Kowhai Beach, 20 Nov (AG), also

recorded from Spirits Bay, Great Exhibition Bay; 8 at Bluff / Te Paki area of 90 mile beach, 10 Sept (KM).

**Wrybill** - 1 Waimamaku Beach, 9 Oct (CD); 12 on Kokota Sandspit 13 Nov (IDG).

**Pacific Golden Plover** - 1 Kokota Sandspit 13 Nov (DD); 2 on Kowhai Beach 20 Nov. (AG).

**Turnstone** - c.200 on Kokota Sandspit on 13 Nov (DCD); 13 Kowhai Beach on 20 Nov (AG), 2 Rangihua Bay, Purerua, 3 Nov (Tim Robinson).

**Knot** About 230 in flock, Kowhai Beach, 22 Nov (AG), c.200 Kokota Sandspit 13 Nov (CD).

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** - at least 1 on Kokota Sandspit, 13 Nov (CD).

**Whimbrel** - 25 on Kokota Sandspit on 13 Nov - (DCD).

**Bar-tailed Godwit** - 850 in wader flock just past southern creek on Kowhai Beach - approachable to about 40 metres. Red flag on left leg of one and orange band on right leg of another, 20 Nov (AG). 4 Waitangi Estuary & 2 Te Haumi 30 Sept (CD), 10 Waitangi Est on 10 Oct. 4,000 estimated on Kokota Sandspit on 13 Nov (CD).

**Brown Quail** - Recorded from Matauri Bay & Moturoa Island.

**Banded Rail** - one close to Colin & June's house Whakaangi / Hihi on 22 July.

**Caspian Tern** - Reported from many sites especially during NZD census in preparation for its own census in due course.

**White-fronted Tern** - Reported from many coastal sites, 74 south of Te Paki 10 Sept.

**Kaka** - heard flying over Puketia Forest during NZ Robin census on 16 July (AG), 2 regularly visiting garden in Kerikeri Road from early August (Theresa Vucich).

**Shining Cuckoo** - 2 seen and heard on Otaio west side (Moturoa Is), 23 Oct, one 28 Oct (LMA).



Noisy party for 2 hours by 4 to 5 birds on 23 Nov in Kohumaru Rd (AG), 1 being fed by a Grey Warbler on Moturoa Island on 17 Dec.

**New Zealand Pipit** – Seen in dunes in many places during NZD census.

**Fernbird** – heard on Urupukapuka Island 7 Nov (CD).

**Whitehead** – Birds introduced to Moturoa Is are spreading (see article on page 7).

**Tomtit** 2 pairs seen near high dam, 23 Oct, 2 calling in Wai-iti Bay, Moturoa Is, 5 Dec (LMA).

**North Island Robin** 1, possibly 2 calling in Awa-awaroa Cove, Moturoa, 5 Dec (LMA), 3 on Moturoa Island 17 Dec (field trip).



North Island Robin – Puketi Forest (DD)

## PROGRAMME

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Feb – Community Room, Kerikeri** – subject and host(ess) to be advised.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March – Community Room, Kerikeri – SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS** (talk & video) – *Detlef Davies*

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April – Christian Centre, Mangonui** – subject to be advised.

Our meetings will usually take place on the second Friday of each month at the Community Room at the side of Proctor Library in Kerikeri but in April, July and October they will be in the Christian Centre on SH10 between Mangonui and Coopers Beach. Carol and I will be away in February and will need somebody to assist, find a topic and host the evening.

### Advance notice

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> June — Kiwi monitoring on Moturoa Island** hosted by Paul Asquith. 7 – 10 pm. Further details in April newsletter.

**Weekend 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> June – Annual Conference & AGM, Tauranga.**

The Conference location is not too far away this year. As Carol and I will be away in Peru at the time, we need a representative from our group to take my place at the Regional Reps' meeting on Friday 1st June. Expenses will be paid for this and it's always an enlightening weekend so hopefully someone will come forward.

## OBITUARIES

We are sad to report the loss of a member and of a DOC colleague in December 2011.

### **DAVE PANCKHURST**

It is with a very real sense of loss that we have to let you know of the recent death of Dave Panckhurst after a brief acute illness. Dave was one of those treasures, a person who, when he heard of a job needing doing, offered his help and could be relied on to carry it out. A keen observer with a love of visiting out of the way places, he always passed on any interesting sightings. During the 5 years of gathering information for the Atlas he was a regular contributor and recently he was part of the N Z Dotterel census team.

We shall greatly miss his smiling face and offer our sincere sympathy to Alison and the family.

*Anthea Goodwin*

### **WILLIE MACRAE**

Sadly we also lost Willie, one of our boatmen on our visits to count shorebirds at Rangaunu & Parengarenga, in a helicopter crash. Carolyn Smith in her tribute describes Willie's skill in designing and making the right tool for a job, from trench-making machines for predator-proof fences to marine mammal-lifting frames. He was a perfectionist in the work he loved and he will be missed by all who shared his passion for wildlife protection in the Far North.

*Detlef Davies*

## NEW ZEALAND DOTTEREL CENSUS

Many thanks to everyone who assisted with this census. The large bundle of completed sheets of results have been sent to the co-ordinator, John Dowding. A summary of the results is set out below. They show a small increase since the last census in 2004 but we feel that with increase in protection measures in some places they should have fared better overall. Clearly there are many places where there are no such measures (especially along the west coast) and the birds continue to decline because of predation and disturbance. We still intend to get a count for Walker Island.

Beach Number	Beach name	2004	2011	Breeding?	Counters	Date
N 15	North Head - Waihopai River	1	10	Possible	Kellie Mayo	15-Oct
N 16	Waihopai River - Mitimiti	9	11		Gary L & Asta W	16-Oct
N 17	Mitimiti - Otoi Rock	9	3	Possible	Gary L & Asta W	15-Oct
N 18	Orongomai Stream Beach	20	1		Isabella & Derry G	8-Nov
N 19	Beach north of Koekoe Beach	7	0		Kevin Matthews	22-Oct
N 20	Herekino Harbour	5	0		Kevin Matthews	22-Oct
N 21	Herekino H - Hunahuna Stream	4	1		Kevin Matthews	22-Oct
N 22	Hukatere Stream - Okura Stream	8	0		Kevin Matthews	22-Oct
N 23	Okura Stream - Ahipara	3	0		Kevin Matthews	22-Oct
N 23A	Hukatere Rd (Houhora) - Bluff		2		Kevin Matthews	8-Oct
N 24	The Bluff - Kahokawa Beach	10	1		Kevin Matthews	8-Oct
N 25	Twilight Beach	2	8		Andrea B, Irene P	11-Oct
N 26	C Maria Van Diemen - Te Werahi B	1	0		Fiona Cameron	12-Oct
N 27	Tapotupotu Beach	5	1	N + 3 eggs	Detlef & Carol Davies	24-Oct
N 28	Spirits Bay & Pandora Beach	20	13	Possible	Detlef & Carol Davies	22-Oct
N 29	Matirarau & Te Huka	4	2		Kellie Mayo	30-Nov
N 30	Tom Bowling Bay	4	4		Kellie M & Fiona C	18-Oct
N 31	Waikuku Beach	8	11		Kellie M & Fiona C	18-Oct
N 32	Whareana Beach	6	7		Kellie Mayo	21-Oct
N 33	Ngakeno Beach	3	10		Kellie Mayo	21-Oct
N 34	Ngamaru Point		4		DJ Neho	20-Oct
N 35	Kokota Sandspit	2	9		D & CD, AG, I & DG	13-Nov
N 36	Kokota to Te Kahiki Stream	2	4	Displays	Detlef & Carol Davies	23-Oct
N 37	Te Kahiki Str to Paxton Point (part)	2	15	Displays	Detlef & Carol Davies	24-Oct
"	" (whole - in vehicle)		27		Kellie Mayo	26-Oct
N 38	Rarawa Beach	12	30		Vicky Rawnsley	25-Oct
N 39	Henderson Bay	10	3		Mary Stanners	16-Oct
N 40	Kowhai Beach	4	1		Lois Wagener	16-Oct
N 41	Houhora Bay	7	10		Lois Wagener	15-Oct
N 41A	Houhora Heads Paddocks		4	N + 2 eggs	Lois Wagener	10-Oct
N 42	Houhora H to 8 kms East Beach	18	0		Lois Wagener	17-Oct
N 43	8 kms East Beach to Kaimaumau	8	0		Kevin Matthews	30-Oct
N 44	Walker Island	6				
N 45	Waerakia Point - Motutara Beach	0	0		Anthea Goodwin	9-Oct
N 46	Puheke Beach	2	0		Anthea Goodwin	9-Oct
N 47	Karikari Beach	10	9		Isabella, Catherine McD	9-Oct
N 48	Whataru Bay (Waipapa Beach)		2		Anthea Goodwin	10-Oct
N 49	Matai Bay	8	0		Maggie Aslund	9-Oct
N 50	Waitemata B to Dick Urlich Road	2	0		Anthea Goodwin	9-Oct

N 51	Dick Ulrich Road - Tokerau B Road	0	1		Isabella Godbert	6-Nov
N 52	Tokerau Beach Road to Awapoko	8	6	Display 2	Mike Bryan	21-Oct
N 53	Aurere Beach	0	0		Mike Bryan	13-Oct
N 54	Otengi Bay	0	2		Mike Bryan	13-Oct
N 55	Taipa Beach	1	2		Anthea Goodwin	13-Oct
N 56	Cable Bay	0	1		Anthea Goodwin	29-Oct
N 57	Coopers Beach	0	0		Anthea Goodwin	13-Oct
N57B	Small beach W of Coopers		3		Dave Panckhurst	13-Oct
N 58	Hihi Beach	0	0		Anthea Goodwin	13-Oct
N58B	Smokehouse Bay / Berghan Point		2		Terry Higginson	12-Oct
N 59	Taemaro Bay	11	6	2 nests	Irene P & Sandra Heihei	17-Oct
N 60	Waimahana Bay	2 [2]		1 nest	Irene P & Dave Henare	19-Oct
"	"		4		Dave Panckhurst	26-Oct
N 61	Motukahakaha Bay	8 [12]			Dave P, Bruce Collett	8-Oct
"	"		14		John Turner	15-Oct
N 62	Tupou Bay	2	0		John Turner	15-Oct
N 63	Camp Bay		3		John Turner	15-Oct
N 64	Taupo Bay	0	6		Di Sinclair	15-Oct
N 65	Tauranga Bay	2	6	Display 2	Carol Davies	11-Oct
N 66	Whangaihe Bay	2	0		Philip Shepherd	18-Oct
N 67	Mahinepua Bay	2	1		Carol Davies	11-Oct
N 67A	Onuru & 2 un-named beaches		0		Carol Davies	11-Oct
N 68	Wainui Beach	3	0		Carol Davies	11-Oct
N 69	Te Ngaere, Piapia & Taiaue Bay	2	3		Carol Davies	11-Oct
N 70	Whau Bay	0	4	1 chick	Daniel Clement	16-Oct
N 71	Parua Bay	1	4		Private caretaker	14-Oct
N 72	Matauri Bay	4	0		Carol Davies	11-Oct
N 73	Cavalli Islands	8	17	1 nest	Adrian W, Steve McM	14-Oct
N 74	Waiaua & Pink Beaches	4	4	Def territ.	Russell Thomas	17-Oct
N 75	Takou Bay	17	19	1 display	Adrian W, Steve McM	17-Oct
N 76	Elliot's Beach	6	8	4 nests	Carol Davies	20-Oct
N 76A	Taronui Beach		0		Carol Davies	14-Oct
N 77	Tapuaetahi	2	0		Carol Davies	14-Oct
N 78	Wiwiki Beach	4	4	2 chicks	Detlef & Carol Davies	16-Oct
N 78A	Ninepin Beach	7	2	Display	Detlef & Carol Davies	16-Oct
N 78B	Rangihoua Bay		2	Display	Carol Davies	13-Oct
N 78C	Wairoa Bay		4		Tim Robinson	17-Oct
N 78D	Te Tii settlement		0		Detlef & Carol Davies	16-Oct
N 79	Onewhero Beach	9	11	Display	Laureen A & Cale R	14-Oct
N 79A	Waitangi Estuary		4	Display	Detlef & Carol Davies	14-Oct
N 79B	Te Haumi Beach		2	Display	Detlef & Carol Davies	10-Oct
N 79C	Motumaire Island		6	Display	Detlef & Carol Davies	3-Jan
N 80	Moturoa Island	0	10	nest + displ	Ian Faulkner	15-Oct
N 81	Okahu Island	0	1		Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct
N 82	Moturua Island	0	0		Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct
N 83	Motuarohia Island	2	8	nst 2 disp	Teri Cottier	13-Oct
N 84	Waewaetorea Island	0	2		Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct
N 85	Urupukapuka - Otehei Bay	14	2	N + 3 eggs	Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct
"	Urupukapuka - Cable Bay	↑	4	Display	Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct
"	Urupukapuka Bay	↓	2		Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct

N 86	Paroa Bay	4	0	Liz & Tony Milnes-Court	17-Oct
N 87	Clendon Cove	6	2	Adrian W & Laureen A	15-Oct
N 87A	Tapeka Beach		2	Helen O-D, Dalia Jones	16-Oct
N 87B	Waitata (Donkey Bay)		1	Helen Ough-Dealy	25-Oct
N 87C	Long Beach, Russell		1	Helen O-D, Dalia Jones	16-Oct
		353	374		

## MOTUROA ISLAND NEWS

### WHITEHEADS

The August 2011 issue of *Apteryx* reported the successful translocation of Whiteheads to the island in May. The birds have spread quite widely on the island and there are plenty of unbanded juveniles around. A few of us recently checked the area around Days Point, the closest mainland to the island but none there yet – just a matter of time though, surely . . .

The Acknowledgments omitted from the original article through lack of space were as follows:

*The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi and their volunteers for their participation in the capture activity – particularly Simon and Morag Fordham.*

*Ark in the Park Project Managers, Maj de Poorter and Andy Warneford for organising the logistics of the project & their input and participation.*

*The Ark in the Park volunteers.*

*Dave the DoC Ranger, Kevin Parker and Tim Lovegrove for wise counsel, material advice and help.*



Just ONE Gannet! – Alcatraz, Paul Asquith

### GANNETS Paul Asquith reported in October:

I am delighted to be able to report another success over the recent long weekend, in addition to the All Blacks win of the Rugby World Cup – at least one and possibly two ‘live’ gannets have taken up residence and were seen by several people at the Alcatraz site. Let’s hope they stay around and it is the start of some action!!

The solar powered acoustic call broadcast was working beautifully when this picture was taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Herewith the picture, can you spot the new arrival?? . . . . It’s the odd one out!!!

**Paul**

### MONITORING IN DECEMBER

In spite of the short notice and proximity to Christmas, 12 members and guests arrived on Moturoa on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec for a weekend’s bird-monitoring, hosted by CJ and Carol Ralph. Among the activities were scrambling up steep slopes checking burrows for Grey-faced Petrels, Little Penguins, Kiwis or whatever else might lurk in there and we succeeded in finding 4 downy but well-grown Petrel chicks. We searched the forested areas on the eastern half of the island for Robins and although 3 were heard or seen, the birds were clearly in lower numbers than was hoped. A few Tomtits were in the same area of forest.



The monitoring team, Moturoa – Laureen, Anthea, Diana, Detlef, Ian, Alison, Mike B, Michael W, Stuart, CJ, Carol R, Carol D (Photo: Diana)



We watched a Shining Cuckoo being fed by a Grey Warbler which looked half the size. A couple of places yielded small flocks of Whiteheads and we were pleased with the spread of this species.

Those who stayed overnight enjoyed some loud sounds of Kiwi, 3 of which were later roaming around near the Ralphs' house. The following morning we managed to climb the vertical cliff at the side of the promontary of Alcatraz with the help of ropes and visited the Gannet-enticing site at the far end. Amid the decoys was one real bird, perhaps the same one as in Paul's photo.

In the afternoon we toured the Black Rocks by boat and counted Red-billed & Black-backed Gulls, White-fronted and Caspian Terns breeding on these islets.

## NEW BIRD BOOKS

### **Collins Travellers Guide to the Birds of New Zealand. By Julian Fitter and Don Merton**

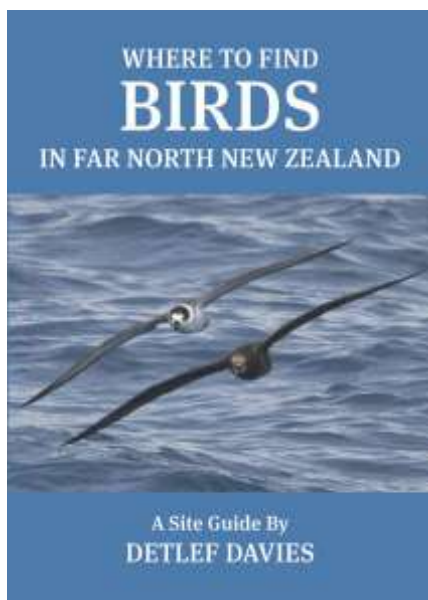
HarperCollins Publishers New Zealand, 1/09/2011 - 320 pages

"An easy-to-use, compact photoguide to the birds of New Zealand, including tips on where to go to make the most of your visit. New Zealand has long been known as 'The Land of Birds', and as a popular holiday destination it is regularly visited by tourists from around the world. The country's birdlife is remarkably rich, with much of it not just endemic, but unlike anything elsewhere. This beautiful photographic guide is the ideal companion for travelling birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Illustrated with over 600 full-colour photographs and featuring detailed species descriptions and distribution maps Key information on national parks helps readers to find the best spots to discover each bird Includes useful information on conservation efforts and offers guidelines on sensible behaviour to encounter nature at its very best".



(From Natural History Book Service website, via Detlef, who bought this book today)



### **Where to find Birds in Far North New Zealand. By Detlef Davies**

Printed by Top Print, Kaitaia. Published by Detlef Davies, November 2011 – 82 pages

"As I travel around I always like to know where good bird watching spots are located. This small book from Detlef is a thorough record of sites within the Far North of the country and provides excellent directions which will more than satisfy my requirements. With the excellent photographs it is more than just a site guide, becoming almost a field guide.

This will be an ideal guide for visitors to the North and I look forward to using it in the near future".

**David Lawrie, OSNZ President**