



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER MAY 2011

Regional Representative

Stuart Wood
24 Olympus Way
Richmond
Nelson 7020

Ph (03) 5443932
Stuartwood38@yahoo.co.nz

Regional Recorder

Don Cooper
1/26 William Street
Richmond
Nelson 7020

Ph (03) 5448109
doncooper@actrix.co.nz

Birdsong has come back to my garden, but shooting season changes avian demographics. Ducks move around a bit, Canada Geese feed on new paddocks of lucerne near Bell's Island, and bitterns keep their heads down.

SHOW AND TELL

My computer doesn't recognise the word, translocating but May's meeting was all about translocation. Putting kiwi back into kiwi habitat. Sandy Toy gave us a great talk on this work. After negative reports of NI brown kiwi in the Rimutaka Forest Park for 100 years, the park now boasts 50-60 birds with 22 known breeders. 20 were culled from Little Barrier and 8 raised from the Kiwi House five years ago. A good success story. A more challenging and long term project is getting great spotted kiwi back into the Flora catchment of Kahurangi National Park. Last seen in the area 30 years ago, 12 birds from the Clark River basin have now been released. No breeding has been evident but five pairs share burrows.

Trapping of predators is a key component to the success of these manoeuvres.

BIRDS SCENE

Waimea Estuary comes up trumps again. Willie counted 51 **wrybill**, and two **scaup** on Bell's Island this week, and has seen nine **little black shags**. **Egret** have been spotted in Lower Queen Street paddocks.

UNDER THE BOARDWALK

Well, along the boardwalk actually. After you've had your flat white or cappuccino at the Marahau Cafe, and if the tidal area is exposed, take a leisurely stroll along the boardwalk over the estuary. **Banded rail** should appear and after filling out your notebook, go back to the cafe. I've heard the number eight at one time, mentioned.

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Spotted shags are back in the harbour, and Fifeshire Rock is a prime winter piece of shag real estate. They also hang out on the Haulashore mole. There's several good vantage points for stopping with telescope or binocs along Rocks Road. Twenty years ago, **pieb shags** nested and roosted on the mainland in Norfolk Pines along Rocks Road. Now they are slowly killing the trees on the end of Haulashore Island and the Norfolk pines have recovered nicely. **Little shags** are also resident and the afore mentioned visiting **little black shags** might be seen fishing in their little groups (can be up to 40 birds) in the harbour or the Haven.

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

So, it wasn't a kiwi after all, just as well, , and you don't have to visit a Russian Port to get a close up of a bittern, "similar to a kiwi with long beak, dense brown feathers and moves close to the ground" (so said a Russian zoologist). A **bittern** has been seen in the Moana Loop embayment recently and watchers in the Waimea Estuary say there could be four – six bittern there.

Not particularly welcome in New Zealand but beautiful in Queensland. Rebecca sent in this lovely rainbow lorrieket photo from her travels.



PARISH NOTICES

Three birdy events to mark in your notebooks, electronic or otherwise:

Golden Bay banded rail survey Saturday or Sunday 28 or 29 May

Another round of gumboots on the feet and eyes to the ground. A good picture is emerging of banded rail distribution around our estuaries. Enquiries please contact Chris Petyt, cpetyt@xtra.co.nz, 035258154.

Matariki celebrations Thursday, 16 June

An outing for the public to enjoy and appreciate the birds of the Motueka Sandspit, led by local OSNZ members. Meet at the carpark at 10.00am. Enquiries please contact Pauline, psamways@clear.net.nz. 03-5287257.

Wader Census Top of South Island: Friday 17 June – Sunday 19 June

The OSNZ Winter Wader Census in Top of South will be done between 17/6/11 and 19/6/11. The Farewell Spit team will leave at Friday 17/6 and be back at either 19 or 20/6. This is still dependant on the availability of the car and will be confirmed later. If people want to join the Farewell Spit team, please let me know. Enquiries please contact Rob, rschckrd@xtra.co.nz, 03-5765371.

Principle Counter(s)	Area
Mike Bell and Brian Bell	Havelock, Lake Grassmere etc.
Peter Field	Delaware Bay to the old freezing works
Willie Cook and Don Cooper	Rabbit Island and Shellbank
Pauline Samways	Manuka Island and Marahau
Rob Schuckard	Mot Sandspit
David Melville	Island in Waimea Estuary and flock of sipo near airport (opposite island.)
Pauline Samways and Gillian Pollock	Grossi Point and Moutere
Kaye Stark and Anna Reynolds	Golden Bay between Pohara and including Collingwood
Rosemary Jorgensen and Helen Kingston	Awarua and Wainui Spit
Farewell Spit Team	Farewell Spit and between Puponga and Totara Ave.
Natascha	Westhaven Inlet. FSPIT Team can give a hand, more on that later.

A reminder: No local meeting for June.

Next month's newsletter will have full coverage of the Queen's Birthday weekend AGM and Wellington Conference. I've delegated a member to the role of reporting, while I'm away in an English summer.

July meeting: Organised entertainment will be arranged for the night and there will be a chance to share birdy chat and tall stories.

The Roving Birdwatcher

Scraping the barrel

The roving birdwatcher has realised her supply of plausible stories are thinning somewhat so she feels the need to nip overseas for a few weeks to garner more material. The last trip wasn't that profitable really, in a twitching sort of way. Only a couple of fleeting sights of suspected pipit sp were seen in the barren Hajar Mountain wadis out of Dubai and into Oman, low mist kept her on the mainland side of Calf of Man and a foot and mouth scare kept her off many public walkways in the UK. Highlights did include the uncommon chough though, common enough on the Isle of Man, close-ups of a dipper in a stream in Matlock and a little wren, after pounding and pummelling a moth about as big as itself, trying to stuff it down a young ones gullet. There were goosander in the Kent River through Kendal, and eider ducks in the sea off Peel, IOM. Robins were a bit of a disappointment. They seemed rather drab in late summer. Squirrels were the main excitement. The first one seen, even though it was the more vulgar grey variety was in Greenwich Park. I think most of Greenwich heard her as she saw it! But later, on a trip north, a deviation to Formby netted the delightful red squirrel, squirrel nutkin of B. Potter fame, though the short sojourn nearly came at the expense of missing the ferry to IOM and a certain amount of domestic strife. Even though the holiday wasn't organized as a birding one, avian activity couldn't be ignored. When waking the first morning overlooking the Greenland Docks in London, calling coot were recognised but the mewling gulls definitely mewled differently and continued to do so throughout the UK. Even the spangled starlings sporting their summer plumage in Hyde Park looked spottier than our birds out here in the colonies. Looking out over the docks late one balmy night a glimpse of the slow graceful flight of the heron, travelling upstream over the Thames was seen. A much bigger bird than our own white-faced one. Small colourful passerines were a delight but there was no time for sorting out the LBJs, though time was made to visit the Hawk Conservancy in Andover to get positive ID on some of the raptors. They are still a rather bewildering lot in the air, maybe this trip will sort them out! GDQ

PROGRAMME 2011

We meet usually on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7.15 pm in the "Solander Building", Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). All birders are welcome! Contact: Don Cooper 03-544 8109 or Peter Gaze wk 03-5463161.

Sat or Sun
28 or 29 May

Golden Bay
Banded rail survey

Thursday 16 June

Matariki Celebrations
Motueka Sandspit

Monday 6 June

No local meeting

Friday 17 June
- 19 or 20 June

Top of the South
Winter Wader Census

Monday 4 July

Evening meeting

Monday 1 August

Evening meeting
Speaker to be confirmed