



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS

OSNZ®

NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2012

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SHOW AND TELL

You never know who's in the neighbourhood. The ten members who turned up at the Feb meeting to share ornithological snippets were treated to two short unexpected presentations. **Yvonne Verkuil** spoke on her migration and genetic studies of **ruffs**. The main focus of the study was at a staging site in the Netherlands. But when a habitat becomes unsuitable, as in this case, due to changes in agricultural land management, inland waders differ from coastal shore birds, are flexible and can choose another flyway. Yvonne's excellent thesis 'The Ephemeral Shorebird: Population Studies of Ruff' can be seen online. **Jesse Conklin** spoke on his work with the **godwits** of Manawatu Est and the info he is collecting from geolocators mounted on individual godwits as they fly to Alaska and back. It seems the early leavers (from Foxton anyway) head to the thawing south while the later leavers head to the later thawing north. Also there's interesting thought on the extent of colouring up of birds associated with different breeding areas. More on Jesse's great work can also be found online.

PS. Rough and Ready. Some books refer to female ruffs as reeves – Ruff and Reeve. Ed.

From tales of waders to tails of gannets –

Rob Schuckard is heading our **March** meeting with his talk – “**Feeding Range and Distribution of Gannets from Farewell Spit in Tasman and Golden Bay**”.

RECOVERY DISCOVERIES

From Willie C -The history from a band of a deceased **spoonbill** found in the Waimea has been confirmed as a 14yr old, banded as a chick in 1997 at the Wairau Lagoon by Bill Cash and his team.

From Auckland, Sth Manakau Harb – on 12 Feb, a **SIPO**, AA6 was spotted.

From Rob S - **AA6** was banded on Rabbit Is 25.1.2008.as an adult (3+). There are now 136 **SIPO** with yellow alpha tags. As well as marked birds on Nelson estuaries on 11/12 Feb, 4 were seen in Golden Bay.

From David M. – On Nelson estuaries 7 banded **SIPO** were seen 11Feb, but fading of the yellow flags was noted.

BIRDS SCENE

From members Out and About with their binoculars and telescopes.

From Rob S.

OSNZ Nelson/Golden Bay did the wader census in February again. The **Farewell Spit team** had a nice range of species. Among them were

- whimbrel - 1 (possibly *hudsonicus*)
- Pacific golden plover - 12
- red-necked stint - 12
- grey plover - 3
- NZ dotterel - 4
- lesser sandplover - 1
- wrybill - 1 (not common on FSpit)
- sanderling - 2

From Nelson Haven

By Peter F.

Highlights from recent visits

Two **Pomarine skua** and five **Arctic skua** mugging terns on 8th January.

A single **L. knot** with the roost on 15th January (first record since October 2008);

35 **NZ scaup** on sewer pond on 28th January; (David M counted five on 22 Feb).

10 **black-billed gulls** on the sewer pond on 28th January;

Also there were 19 **gannets** not far offshore on the 28th - the 2nd highest number I have recorded there, usually the count is between 1 and 3.

And by Ingrid

From Tahuna Beach

15 December 2011, Tahuna Beach: around 20 **shearwater** feeding in shallow water close to the beach.

From another beach.

22 January 2012, Rabbit Island: 100s of **shearwaters** feeding in shallow water along beach.

From a sailing boat

28 December 2011, about 4km offshore from Mapua **Wandering Albatross**



From notebooks

More on Scaup

By Peter F.

I have a first record of 3 at the Nelson Haven oxidation pond in October 2008, none in 2009, then 1-3 in second half of 2010. Numbers suddenly blossomed in June last year when I recorded 24 on the wetlands (and John Campbell had seen 50 in mid-May). I'd had real hopes they might have bred this year, but no apparent signs of this happening on my (infrequent) visits to the pond/wetlands. Maybe next year...?

Another good spot to count scaup and watch for breeding is the fresh water Moutere embayment, on the way to Motueka. I can't recall there being any there fifteen years ago. GDQ

From Elsewhere

It's easy to spot the lovely white **Royal spoonbill** on high tide roosts or out in the estuary channels. The summer non-breeders have recently been joined by others. A nation wide count is coming up in August. Start practicing now.GDQ

From the editor's desk

Thanks to all who contributed to this month's blurb. Keep it coming. Contributions for next newsletter please by 25 March. Gail 02 5450456
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