



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER NOV/DEC 2013

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A WARM WELCOME to new members: Nick Smith of Westport, and Carol Whiddett of Motueka.

Lately I've enjoyed watching **red bills** hawking at dusk on the lovely calm evenings. I wish they'd come closer and nab the mosquitoes that come through my open French doors. Closer into town Mr Geoff Candy has watched a dozen or so **red billed gulls** repeatedly diving through a garden sprinkler during the day. Could they detect something, like small invertebrates or were they just cooling off? Also GC notes regular falcon sightings at Waahi Takaroa Golf Course for several years now including plucking stations which seem to be randomly out in the open.

This month's mystery photo, by Willie Cook



And yes, last month's feet belonged to a shag, the ocean going spotted shag.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The Mayor's Christmas dinner is still going ahead albeit in a different venue than previously advertised, but Mr Geoff Candy relates an avian incident of a rather different liquefaction issue. A **welcome swallow** nest in Mapua has supported 4 broods this season. A dozen or so birds have been flying around the site with one bird still in the nest, still being fed, perhaps by many. The residents of the property thought something was amiss so looked in and found the bird had its foot stuck in the mud with a large pile of droppings also in the nest. They took the nest down, broke it up to release the foot, the bird sat on the ground for a few minutes then flew off, hopefully grateful!

FROM PETE GAZE

" The Nelson Branch has recently purchased an acoustic recorder that can be left in the field, programmed to record birdsong at certain times of the day. Friends of Flora are using similar technology to monitor their kiwi and other OSNZ branches have used these to investigate birdlife in wetlands. Our thought was to better understand the distribution of wetland species such as rail, crakes, bittern and fernbird in our own region. Ingrid is happy to co-ordinate this work initially but she will need to know of others who are keen. This is an opportunity to become quite engrossed in one little study and with a view to writing up the results for one of the society's publications. And, as if to focus our efforts, Project Janszoon has offered to buy the branch another recorder if we make a commitment to begin our studies with the wetlands in Abel Tasman National Park. This would mean deploying the devices in wetlands such as at Anchorage, Onetahuti, Awaroa etc. Transport up and down the coastline can probably be arranged at no cost. If you are prepared to put some energy and commitment into this exciting work Ingrid would love to hear"

MARAHU, mid Nov, **banded rail** with one of three chicks, at the beginning of ATNP.

photo Pauline Samways



WILLIE AND DON have been continuing with the **VOC** banding project in the Waimea but note that the birds are getting very wary of human figures wandering about with various contraptions and they are avoiding being caught. On one trip other **waders** were the centre of attention with some concentrated spotting of marked birds, with a **tattler** briefly seen amongst the mass. Hot off the Press: Three VOC chicks were caught and banded this morning 19/12/2013.

PETER FIELD RECORDS:

Bell's Island Shellbank 23 November 2013

Bar-tailed Godwit total no. c. 2,500

Orange, right tibia, x3

White/Green, left tibia, x2

White, left tibia, x1

Green, left tibia, x1

Red Knot total no .c. 450

Orange, right tibia, x1

White, left tibia, x1

GOOD NEWS

Several broods of scaup have been spotted out at the Wakapuaka Settling Ponds, P&CF, PF. Caspian Terns got a good start to their nesting on the Shell Banks,

BUT NOT SO GOOD NEWS

Willie found the Caspians washed out after high tides with winds last week. From Gillian 22 Nov, " Strangely silent outside this morning. The shining cuckoo which has sung daily since September from the nearby trees flew into a window yesterday and we found it dead on a veranda."

PROGRAMME 2014

We meet **usually** on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7.15 pm in the "Solander Fisheries Building", Cross Quay, off Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). All birders are welcome! Contact: Don Cooper 03-544 8109 or Gail 03-5450456.

January no indoor meeting

February indoor meeting Monday 10th (2nd Monday in the month)

Wader Count between 14-17 February.

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for a January newsletter please email or phone:
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