



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER MAY 2014

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BLAST FROM THE PAST.

1903 Sept. 'Poverty Bay Herald' "Bittern which have for some years been protected in Otago and Southland are now protected in Canterbury. This is considered a right step as these birds were in danger of extinction." (Quaint wording!)

BUT ABOUT 6 WEEKS AGO –

at our May meeting, Richard Wells gave a superb presentation on his trip with Paul Sagar monitoring Southern Buller's Albatrosses (previously known as Mollymawks) on the Snares. Daughter Tamar Wells was also part of the team. The whole-island count earlier this year was the fifth since 1969. Incubating high on pedestal nests these ocean birds sit low under the native high vegetation. Indications are that numbers are similar to the count estimated in 2002. Sea lions, and snipe add to the thrill of the place. Thank you Richard for your enthusiasm and fabulous photography. The project was funded by Deepwater Group Limited, DoC and MPI.

TAKE YOUR TIME TO CHRISTCHURCH –

and some sandwiches too.

Make a stop at Maruia Falls, and a **weka** is sure to come out of the scrub for some crumbs, and scan the area for brown creeper, I've only been lucky once, many years ago. Drive through Springs Junction and just up the road turn left at Marble Hill Reserve. Near the amenities share a few remaining crumbs with a **South Island robin**, pretty much a certainty, though a chaffinch or two might appear first. Next, stop at the car park for the St James walkway. Ken George was there recently and writes: – *'...walk around to the observation deck at the little tarn and the **riflemen** are plentiful, will come and (briefly) perch on the wooden handrail. You'll need very close focussing binos to get them that close. They're looking great in the new plumage too, the green is an incredible colour when seen under the colour-saturated overcast winter light.'*

Closer to home Ken also reports noticeable bellbirds, robin and brown creeper on the walk to Harwood's Hole.

HAIL THE HERONS

The estuary edges seem to be supporting **white faced herons** in dozens around the region at the moment with more out in the paddocks, KG counted four **white heron** on the same day in Golden Bay recently and notes Pohara is a good place to spot **reef heron**, seen on most days, (look out for ours this side of the bay at Motueka and Waimea), **cattle egret** have been seen at Motueka, CM, and Golden Bay, KG. Though not in the flocks seen thirty years ago. There's good numbers in several groups of **royal spoonbill** in both bays. But the star of the show goes to an inland sighting of a **PACIFIC HERON** (white-necked heron) at 88 Valley near Wakefield. First seen 7 May by Lindsay Grueber and a week or so later verified by Don Cooper, Peter and Charmain Field et al. It hasn't been reported recently, but keep your eyes out for another sighting, especially as these birds have been in both North and South Islands.

PACIFIC HERON

Photo by L. Grueber 2014



RECOVERY DISCOVERIES

We now know part of the history of Craig Martin's well photographed **royal spoonbill** shown in the last newsletter. It was banded by Mike Bell at Wairau Lagoons in November 2005, not spotted until 25 June 2013 when David M photographed it at Motueka Marina, still there on 6 July 2013 and now seen again in Motueka in April 2014.

FALCONS FLYING

Falcon sightings have come in from East Takaka, Dovedale, and one settling on a tall flowering flax stalk at the Wakapuaka settling ponds. CP, PF, DM.

WHERE THERE'S WEKA

Amber Calman at Tophouse has had a pair of weka produce two chicks this autumn and the family comes to her front door steps for titbits and Craig Martin has had two adults foraging on his lawn, Motueka West Bank.

AND SOME OTHERS

It's not often I get to mention kea so it's a pleasure to report Chris Petyt's sighting of 11 **kea** flying over East Takaka on 30 April. (Also see notices for an upcoming meeting on kea.)

Two **marsh crake** were seen at Wakapuaka settling ponds 6 May by Graeme Martyn.

I have a photo of three **dabchick** in that area in 2010, since then only one individual at a time has been spotted but in May this year two birds more or less together have been sighted. GM, P&CF. One a very pale bird considered to be an immature/juvenile. At the recent conference at Palmerston North an OSNZ dabchick survey was discussed. I think we may get invited!

Mid April at Pakawau Ken G counted a flock of 42 **banded dotterel**.

Below is the delightful profile of a **fernbird** seen at Marahau in April.

Photo by Craig Martin 2014



ONE HOUR'S WORTH OF EASY PARTICIPATION

The national annual garden bird survey is coming up. An excuse to spend one hour in the garden, forget the trowel, have binoculars and a drinking vessel (for you, not the birds) sometime between 28 June and 6 July and jot down the highest number of each species you see or hear at one time. Enter your results online at <http://gardenbirdssurvey.landcareresearch.co.nz> or ask me for a form.

Photo Peter Field 2014



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.

Tues 24 June Motueka Sports Pavilion 7pm

The Kea Conservation Trust and Department of Conservation are hosting a community discussion on kea. All welcome. www.keaconservation.co.nz

NZ Garden Bird Survey 28 June - 6 July 2014

**Monday 7 July
Indoor Meeting**

**Leona Plaiser
Macquarie Island**

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for June newsletter by 30 June, please email, snailmail, or phone:

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