



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS
OSNZ®

NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2015

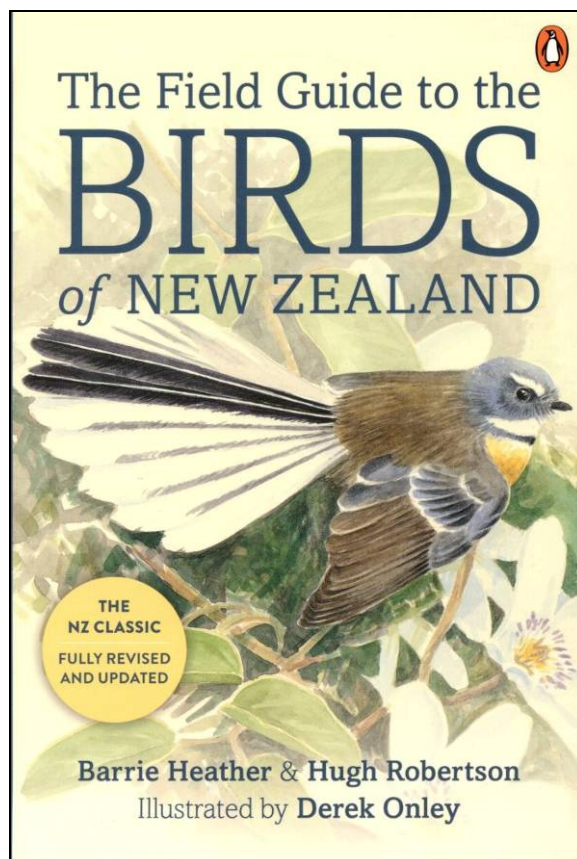
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Recently I had a little pom pom of a fantail bouncing around my lawn. What good luck I don't have a cat, what bad luck a neighbour's cat has added my patch to its territory. The front cover of the latest OSNZ Field Guide published in June, shows a fantail with a full set of feathers— or does it? David Melville suggests for homework you take a closer look and deduce the age of this bird and why, but it's possible he may have skipped the country and will be unable to check your answers!



PADDOCK PUDDLES

With all the recent rain many coastal paddocks are swamped with water and supporting good collections of waders. Spotting from the car window is easy, except for fidgety grandchildren – one wants to count birds, the other wants to splash in the puddles.

JUNE WADERS

From Rob:

Thanks so much for your effort and early delivery of data; census results in a week is impressive for the area covered. Apart from a very wet Friday, the weather was in general pleasant with good counting conditions. All areas have been covered including counts of land inwards paddocks with Pied Oystercatchers and Variable Oystercatchers (and big flocks of Red-billed Gulls). For the first time a boat trip was made to the Collingwood Island and the bar in front of Totara Avenue.

In total about 20 people counted the Nelson Farewell Spit area and about 9 people did the Marlborough part of the census. In total 20,000 shorebirds were counted between Nelson and Westhaven inlet. Of these, about 14% migratory shorebirds and 86% endemic shorebirds.

Farewell Spit:

About 5000 Pied Oystercatchers were encountered on the spit. An average number, very likely linked with the very wet conditions of the inland paddocks of Golden Bay.

About 750 Banded Dotterels were counted an average number for Farewell Spit

A total of about 2500 Bar-tailed Godwits were counted, the highest number since 1996.

A total of 46 Ruddy Turnstone was counted, an average winter number.

In total 70 Red Knots were counted, with one exception from 2005, the lowest winter number ever counted on a Farewell Spit winter count.

Banana Pan was where the main concentration of migratory shorebirds were counted, also a Curlew and a Sanderling were spotted in this area.

Golden Bay:

In Golden Bay, 5700 Pied Oystercatchers were counted, about 40% of all the birds were on the paddocks land inwards to Rockville and Bainham.

Tasman Bay:

An average number of about 3500 Pied Oystercatchers were counted in Tasman Bays.

Banded Dotterels were close to 200, a good number. Most were counted at the airport near Motueka.

Only 115 Bar-tailed Godwits were counted. On Motueka Sandspit there were no godwits and the winter flock was likely somewhere in the paddocks and missed during the census.

Next Spring count will be between **27th and 30th November 2015.**

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Thanks to Dave Butler for entertaining a room full of members on 3 Aug, with his talk "**Birdlife and its conservation on the northern islands of Tonga**". He covered the frustrations and highlights of survey work, and the interesting breeding biology of the Tongan megapode, which instead of building a mound, buries its eggs in warm volcanic sands. The eggs are still being harvested by some of the locals.

*"Bird surveys of Late and Fonualei islands, Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga
September 2013*

*Draft report to Ministry of Lands, Environment,
Climate Change and Natural Resources (MLECCNR)"* can be read on line.

We welcome John Weeber from Collingwood into our flock and wish him many happy hours birding in the lovely Golden Bay.

And with great sadness we report Pauline Samways lost her courageous battle with cancer recently. Her life celebration was held in Motueka with many Motueka birding achievements being noted especially regarding godwits and the Motueka Sandspit. We offer sincere condolences to her husband David and family.

BLUE DUCK

This year reports have come in from Cobb Valley, and closer to settlements, Marahau, Maitai River, and Wainui.

EARLIER ON IN THE YEAR

From Ken George, Pohara, June:

Some pretty good birding over here at the moment, especially with the last few days of fine calm weather. Took a drive up to the Spit yesterday, more white faced herons around than I normally around, in groups of 20 or more, and also kingfishers in far higher numbers than normal. From Pakawau up to Puponga there would have been a couple of kingfishers every hundred meters or so. On one 150 meter length of power line I counted 8, attached is a shot of 4 of them in a group. Also from Takaka township to Puponga I counted 4 kotuku, and some big groups of Royal Spoonbills.

Not a photo of the Tongan Megapode but another exotic, kagu in a national park in New Caledonia. Despite the mining and logging they are clearly alive well and breeding! PB

Photo Paul Bennett



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.

Monday 7 September
Indoor evening meeting

Weka in the Sounds
Ralph Powlesland Biology and ecology of weka in the Marlborough Sounds; what factors enable this flightless species to thrive in the Sounds?

COMING UP November **Wader Count**, end of November
Enquiries and confirmation of dates to Rob Schuckard

Red Billed Gull Count, a National wide count following on from last year's preliminary count.

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for September newsletter by 25th, please email, snailmail, or phone:
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