



Birds New Zealand
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Birds New Zealand

Otago Region Newsletter 8/2015 August 2015

Ornithological Snippets.



Mary Thompson saw this part hybrid stilt at Andersons Bay inlet on 24th July



On July 23rd Janet Ledingham observed 3 black stilts feeding busily at the northern end of the All Day Bay Lagoon. "From time to time there were minor confrontations with pied stilts feeding in the same area. There were a number of banded dotterels around, but no black-fronted dotterels that I could see.



Then on July 25th I found presumably the same three birds on a roadside farm pond some way along Fortification Road below a house on a rise with Rapid no 347. There were also about six black fronted dotterels and a smaller number of banded dotterels. Very rewarding and I enjoyed watching them for some time. It was

a pity that the pond mud on the stilt's legs stuck to the bands so I could not read them."

Bruce McKinlay was also up there on Aug 16. See his photos at <http://www.birdingnz.net/forum/viewtopic.php?f=9&t=4777&p=22723#p22723>

Lesley Gowans saw 2 Pied Shags at Taieri Mouth on the sand spit just down from the bridge on Saturday 25th July and Lesley and Mary T also saw them again on 31 July. One was in adult plumage and the other nearly adult with just a few smudges still on breast. They were with a group of Little Pied shags, both black and pied morphs and it was good to directly compare the size and bill lengths. Lesley again saw 2 Pied Shag at Purakanui on 5th August-same two?

Mary and Lesley also saw an adult Caspian Tern fishing with some success over the inland side of the Akatore estuary on Friday 31 July; then it headed back out to sea down the river.

NZ falcon attended Mary's back garden on 15th July; it's arrival caused the silvereyes feeding at the sugar water to disperse in a frenzied manner (several crashing into the window). The falcon landed in the oak tree and proceeded to pluck and eat a silvereye over at least 5 minutes. The silvereyes all took themselves off to the neighbours and the chaffinches remained high in the oak calling in a manner I had not heard before. A kereru, who had obviously seen the falcon from afar, flew pointedly in towards the falcon and away again; after this attack the falcon moved to another branch to finish cleaning talons and then flew off via the neighbours and instantly the silvereyes went completely silent-very very. The falcon was seen again in the oak tree on Sunday 16th August (but no prey this time) and Sue G had seen it flying around in previous weeks a couple of times which is not surprisingly with the obvious easy food-source.

Notices and Business

Labour Weekend Field Trip at Te Anau

Good interest was expressed at our last meeting for a weekend field trip so plans are in place for a do-it-yourself weekend field trip at Te Anau. Those coming will organise their own accommodation and food but we will all get together for joint activities during the weekend.

Folks keen to attend should book their own accommodation for Friday night 23rd October through to Monday 26th October. The Te Anau Lakeside Holiday Park has a variety of accommodation types to suit all budgets, so get together with partners and friends and plan to join us. You will need to book because it is a holiday weekend.

Plans for the weekend are flexible at the moment but include: a day trip to Homer Tunnel to look for Rock Wren and Blue Duck and back in the Eglinton Valley for Mohua, Robin, Riflemen, Kaka, etc. Another day can be spent searching for nesting Banded Dotterel, SIPO, stilts, Black-fronted terns and Black-billed gulls and Crested grebes. Other options: a trip to Rakatu Wetlands in the lower Waiau about 20km south-good walking tracks and plenty of waterfowl; part of the Kepler Track (often long-tailed cuckoo heard here).

On the homeward journey, the various rivers (Oreti, Mararoa, Mataura) need to be checked for colonies of black-billed gulls and black-fronted terns, and maybe a detour to Mavora Lakes to check for Crested Grebes.

If you are coming or are interested please let Mary know so you can be kept up-to-date with any other information. **Mary Thompson.**

Forest and Bird South Island Gathering: Makarora, 10/11 October 2015

The focus this year is on birds as well as braided rivers. Registrations due by 4th September; contact Mark Ayre <bullersalbatross@gmail.com> or Forest and Bird for more details.

Notes from AGM held 22 July

Student sponsorship

Birds NZ Council had asked Regions to consider using some of their accumulated funds to sponsor a student member to attend the annual Birds NZ Conference to present a paper. The meeting agreed that we should undertake this for 1 year in the first instance (to gauge response, usefulness and feasibility); \$200 towards travel. Thanks to Kalinka and Hamish, who agreed to draw up some criteria and application rules that could be circulated to the local students in time for them to apply in March 2016 before the deadline for conference Abstracts. A selection process also needs to be put in place.

Projects

Proposed new project:

Birds of the Town Belt 2016. It was agreed that this be explored further with Paul Pope and the Dunedin Amenities Society to come up with a doable survey method as one aim is also to involve the public and increase awareness of birds in Dunedin. Steering committee is Jill Hamel, Francie Beggs, Alan Baker and Mary Thompson, who will report back in due course.

National Red-billed Gull nest count Oct –Dec 2015

This will be coordinated with Chris Lalas and Lyndon Perriman. We will be allocated accessible sites. We have some funds for boat or plane left over from spoonbill survey.

On-going projects

Sinclair Wetlands-seasonal (July, Oct, Jan, April)

Beyond Orokonui-Sept to December

Wader counts-winter and summer

Morepork survey-5 yearly?

Banding tuis and Bellbirds-Murray Efford

Prion Project-Graeme Loh

Introduction to Ornithology

Birds NZ has produced a 7 lecture powerpoint series for community education on bird biology and study methods. Mary proposed we run one

of these next year-help with finding venue, advertising, publicity, moral support- would be appreciated.

Field trips

Labour weekend do-it-yourself trip to Te Anau (see elsewhere for details)
Possibilities for 2016: Okia Reserve(fernbirds etc), Catlins.

Mary Thompson.

Booming Bitterns

The acoustic recorders will be placed out at the Sinclair Wetlands from mid-August to see when bitterns commence booming. Hopefully some birds will still be present in the area. If we pick up booms the plan is to try to locate the position (territory) of the booming birds. This will be done in late September or October on calm fine evenings.

To do this we need teams of people to be stationed at sites about 500m apart and to record booms and direction of booms from 30 minutes before sunset for 1.5 hours. We may need to repeat the survey a couple of times. We are following a standard DOC procedure so our monitoring can be used for nation-wide data gathering.

If you would like to be on the on-call email list to participate in this survey, please give your email and cell phone number to Mary; the survey requires calm fine weather so the scheduling will be short notice. Minimum of 4 people needed but more would be better.

Magazines for the Public Library?

The Dunedin Public Library has the magazine of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, formerly called "Birds" and now called "Nature's home". Unfortunately, the firm supplying us with the magazine went bankrupt. The library has placed an order with another firm, but in the meantime we are missing three issues – Winter 2014, Spring 2015 and Summer 2015. If you know of anyone who gets this magazine and would be willing to donate those issues to the library, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact either Alan Baker or Jackie Howell at the library.

Alan Baker

“Beyond Orokonui” Field Trip: Saturday morning at 9.30 am, 29 August

We begin our spring surveys of forest birds in the various habitat types in East Otago starting on 12th September and taking place at least every second weekend in the mornings through to December, and depending on volunteer availability, some weekday surveys may take place.

We are keen to have as many volunteers as possible as this is an extensive survey and offers of help even for just a few of the surveys would be valuable. Please indicate to Kelvin or Mary if you are interested to get on the email list.

The up-coming field trip is an introduction and refresher to the methodologies, particularly on how to listen and look for rifleman, brown creeper and tomtit. It is a great chance to brush up on bird call identification, GPS use, filling out the form correctly, or any other aspect of the project, and do some birding in a new area.

This field trip on Saturday 29th August (with bad weather back-up on 30th) is to be held on Kelvin Lloyd's property in Manse Road off Blueskin Bay. Bring lunch and refreshments, warm clothes, wet-weather gear and strong shoes/boots. Car-pooling from George Street, at Woodhaugh Gardens; please be there in time to leave at 9 am.

Some may wish to drive directly to Manse Road to be there at 9.30 am. Here are the directions: Drive north on SH1, turn left on Manse Rd, which is the second road on the left past the Waitati Store. Drive up Manse Rd to 156 Manse Rd. Note the upper part of Manse Rd is not maintained by DCC, hence is a little rough, and any low-bodied cars should drive with a wheel on the centre ridge to avoid bumps underneath. There is room to park on the side of the road at 156.

Phone Kelvin 482 1156 cell 021 757 303 for any further information. If weather on the day is not promising, please phone Kelvin between 7.30 and 8.00 am on the Saturday to check for cancellation.



Google Map shows approximate location.

Kelvin Lloyd

Programme 2015

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held at 7.30pm in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street.

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| Wed Aug 26 | Kelvin Lloyd
Update on the Beyond Orokonui project. |
| Sat. Aug. 29 | Beyond Orokonui Field Trip; methodology refresher. Commences 9.30am Blueskin Bay farm. Phone Kelvin 482 1156 |
| Wed Sept 23 | Catriona MacLeod and Priscilla Wehi
"Birds as measures of biodiversity." |
| Wed Oct. 28 | to be arranged |
| Sun. Nov. 8 | Summer Wader Count. High tide 1435hrs in Dunedin. Height 1.9m. |
| Wed Nov. 25 | Philippa Agnew "Foraging behaviour of Little Blue Penguins at Oamaru." |

Newsletter editor: Derek Onley, derekonley@yahoo.com

Many thanks to all who contributed.

Final date for contributions to next newsletter: Sept 17.