



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS  
OSNZ®

## **NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2010**

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Daylight saving time is here and we were told to put our clocks forward an hour. But, when an appointment at say 1700 hours, is changed an hour, it is brought forward to 1600 hours or put back to 1800 hours. One year I didn't change my clocks in protest. It was a difficult 5 months or so. The Tide Times publication has a better idea, advance your clocks an hour. I don't suppose the objects of our desires care less, avian objects, that is. Gail D. Quayle

### **SHOW AND TELL**

Nine members met on Monday night to hear Bill Gilbertson from the Nelson Cycle Trails Trust talk about the Tasman Circuit of the National Cycleway Project. More specifically, the coastal section from Richmond to Mapua and around Pearl Creek area, was discussed. There are implications for that dwindling special habitat where bittern, banded rail and marsh crake are regularly seen. We saw maps from Bill and Willie Cook showed us photos of the resident birds *in situ*.

## **BIRDS SCENE**

### **Unusual, interesting, new records, and, dismal or cheerful observations from our members.**

The **dabchick** is back. Peter Fields reported seeing it with 2 **scaup** on the oxidation ponds recently. But the black-fronted dotterel pair seem to have disappeared. Willie saw two **whimbrel** on Bells Island at the end of Sept. Also at Bells Island, David Melville watched **VOC** feeding on beach wrecked lions mane jellyfish. Only one other oyster catcher species in the world has been recorded as doing the same. David also reported two **banded dotterel** nests on Motueka Sandspit which now have, courtesy of Motueka DOC, tape and baton surrounds. He also has a great photo of horse and dog tracks approaching one nest but veering around the fencing. I hope he can produce a photo of chicks in several weeks time. Peter Gaze, unfortunately, reports the first **black-fronted tern** nesting on the Waiau was lost in the recent floods.

## **RECOVERY DISCOVERIES**

### **Recent sightings and recoveries of bands, tags and flags**

Willie's **harriers** feature again this month. .Probably another hit and run incident. A harrier found on the side of the road at Waimea West on 21 Sept, was banded by Willie as a juvenile of unknown sex at Edens Road, on 20.6.2005.

David recorded two **VOC** at Bells Island on 28 Sept, that had previously been banded in Kaikoura as chicks.

A snippet of info that's come down through the birdy bush telegraph tells of a **whimbrel** banded in the Shetland Islands 24 years ago, recaptured by its original bander. The bird was thought to be two or three years old at time of banding, now breaking the record for banded whimbrel longevity at, at least 26 years.

## **A CONFUSION OF COLOUR**

### **Hot off the Press**

Were the left leg bands, red, green or blueygreen? Was the right leg in yellow or orange or both? The bird seen by some of our Golden Bay team on October 7 at Ligar Bay was definitely a **shore plover**, but what were those colour bands? New Zealand shore plovers have been released on Mana Island and some take to a bit of wandering. With a bit of deducing, one answer from the Banding Office suggests R/G, and O/Y, a female last recorded from near Cape Palliser two weeks ago. A great sighting for our region anyway.

And out of 24 **royal spoonbill** still hanging around Motueka Estuary, in varying stages of breeding dress, one had yellow/metal on the left and red or yellow or was it something else, on the right. If only it had shuffled to another leg position.

## OUT FOR THE COUNT

Around the coastline **waders** will be counted in early November with the high tides, Tasman and Golden Bays, and Farewell Spit 5 - 8 Nov. Please note amended dates. Phone Rob to get your place on the team. [rschckrd@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz) Ph 03 5765371. Rob counted 852 godwit on Motueka Sandspit on 28 Sept and remarked that number is only 50% of the sandspit summer population recorded in Nov last year.

And into the bush, also in November, **passerines** will be counted along Flora Track. Also amended dates. Tues 2, Tues 16, and Thursday 25. [psamways@clear.net.nz](mailto:psamways@clear.net.nz) Ph 03 5287257

## TIME FOR A COMMERCIAL

A new book to add to your book shelf

***'Kakapo – rescued from the brink of extinction'*** by Alison Ballance.

A book launch will be held on:

### 5 November 2010

Trinity Church Community Hall, 64 Nile Street (behind the church)

1830h – start – wine and finger food

1900h – talk by Alison Ballance and guest speakers

Ticket price **\$5** – proceeds donated to the **Kakapo Recovery Programme**

Sponsored by Craig Potton Publishing and Page & Blackmore

## HERE AND THERE

Willie's been there and back, translocating **saddlebacks** in Queen Charlotte Sound from Motuara Island to Blumine Island. 29 birds, not counting the one that got away were taken to their new home to join others from three years of translocations.

And a reminder here for the opportunity to count **robins** on Adele Island. There's been three takers so far, and one seat left on the boat. Be quick for this one. Contact Peter Gaze for details.

## AND THE WINNER IS .....

The prize of a small chocolate fish for the first recorded **shining cuckoo** call of the year goes to David Melville of Dovedale .He heard the call on 28 Sept. The prize can be redeemed at the end of the year.

## **THE ROVING BIRDWATCHER**

### **Oh Great Crested One**

No, there hasn't been a local sighting, of great crested grebe, and I only saw a photograph of the three in Otago Harbour this June, but ever since I saw crested grebe courtship in full display on Lake Alexandrina some years ago I've been hooked by these fabulous birds. My first and closest sightings to Nelson were on a couple of West Coast lakes, also some years ago, the lakes now described as former traditional strongholds. During the past 18 years I've regularly seen them on waters of the hydro system in the Upper Waitaki, with a hunch that numbers are increasing. The February 2009 Crested Grebe census confirmed that.

From the carpark at L. Alexandrina I've watched an adult on a nest feed pulverised feathers to little chicks scuffling through their parent's plumage. In recent years at Sailors Cutting (Waitaki Valley) a nest under a willow, just out from the lake edge near the boat ramp, could be watched from the carpark., A pair were repairing and redecorating this site on 1 Sept this year. You can stop just off the main road for a photo of breeding pairs alongside Wairepo Arm, just south of Twizel.

In summer 2007 we visited daughter Tess in London, staying in her flat in Surrey Quays area. I was greeted with a London survival bag at the airport, in it was a British Bird Guide. Tess had breeding crested grebes outside her bedroom window. One pair had chicks, and another pair were on a nest. Near Greenland Dock, apartments and landscaped areas have been built on the old wharf areas and the dry docks kept full with water, and floating rubbish, with notices to warn against swimming, to no avail. Small boxed vegetation islands have been placed out amidst the water. In the middle of one was the grebe nest. The grebes shared their habitat with coots, mallards and tufted ducks (*Aythya fuligula*), as they do at Sailors Cutting, except we have our own *Aythya novaseelandiae*, (NZ Scaup).

Back in NZ, the Clutha hydro system is another area where great crested grebes seem to be doing well, and winter dispersal to coastal areas is something to look out for, as far as Nelson?

Maybe great crested grebes are more adaptable than we think. GDQ

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

Breeding is in full swing. Now, November and into December nests and nesting behaviour can be observed around coastlines, riversides, mountainsides, in your gardens, up the creek, on the farm and bush and scrub areas, and don't forget to fill out **OSNZ nesting cards**.

## PROGRAMME 2010

We meet usually on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7.15 pm in the "Solander Building", Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). Anyone interested is welcome! Contact Stuart Wood 03-544 3932 or Don Cooper 03-544 8109.

Wednesday 27 October

Adele and the robins

Monday 1 November

Indoor meeting  
Speaker to be confirmed

Friday to Monday  
5 to 8 November

Wader count  
Tasman & Golden Bays and  
Farewell Spit

Tuesday 3, Tuesday 16 and  
Thursday 25 November

Flora Track 5min bird counts

Thanks to all who contributed.

Contributions for the November newsletter: please email or phone me by 6 November. Gail 03 5450456 [stagefrightmusic@paradise.net.nz](mailto:stagefrightmusic@paradise.net.nz)