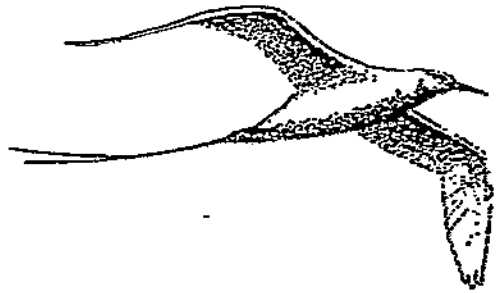


AMOKURA



*Newsletter
of the Northland Region
of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand*

March 2010

Amokura 97

RECENT EVENTS

LOCALLY.

In the early evening of 22nd and 23rd December, 2009 two Cirl Buntings were observed feeding, flying, singing and perching in a totara and also in an apple tree in a suburban garden in Kamo.

During a high tide count 4,000 Bar-tailed Godwit were recorded at Ruakaka on 3rd January 2010. Two Fairy Terns and a Turnstone were also observed at Ruakaka on 9th February and 7 - 8 Fairy Terns at Portland on 16th February.

PUBLICITY DISPLAYS.

OSNZ Northland members have recently been involved in two community events. Posters and charts highlighting the Society and ornithological activities of the Northland Region, were well received at the "Conservation in Action" day at the Museum and also at the Onerahi Community day.

TAIKO EXPEDITION NEWS.

Six weeks at Taiko Camp in the summer, on a maintenance and development programme, provided nine expedition members with a wide range of ornithological observations. Redpolls, in large flocks, skylarks and Parea (Chatham Island pigeon) were feeding in the paddocks adjacent to the camp. Chatham Island warblers, white-eyes, chaffinches and red-crowned parakeets shared the bush fringes.

The Chatham Island Tui that were translocated to the Awatotara during the autumn of 2009 are now visiting the area around Taiko Camp and are dispersing widely.

The first Taiko has returned to the Sweetwater Covenant attracted by taped calls. Hopefully next breeding season more birds will return to the artificial burrows within this predator-proof area. Infrastructure is now in place ready for the translocation of Chatham Island Petrel and Taiko to the Sweetwater enclosure during April and May.

MIRANDA AND BEYOND.

Claire and I had an interesting time at a Bird Identification course at Miranda over Labour weekend. We stopped at Kawakawa Bay on the way and counted the following; Godwit 42; SIPO 22; VOC 7; NZ Dotterel 6; White faced Heron 3; Pied Stilt 4; Caspian Tern 2; Pied Shag 4; R.B. Gull 10; B.B.Gull 3.

Over the weekend at Miranda we saw Black tailed Godwit, Hudsonian Godwit, Knot, Black Shag, Caspian Tern, White fronted Tern, Turnstone, Sharp tailed Sandpiper, Wrybill, Pied Stilt, White faced Heron, Curlew, Sandpiper, Golden Plover, Spoonbill, Banded Dotterel, SIPO and VOC.

On Monday we continued around the Coromandel Peninsula. At Whiritoa we saw 5 NZ Dotterel, (one banded M/OKG). At Whangamata there was a small fenced area with 4 N.Z. Dotterel, one with a yellow flag. At Onemana we came upon a N.Z. Dotterel with 3 chicks and further down we saw another 3 chicks with 2 adults. Claire went back to check on the original trio while I stayed with the second lot. Yes- we were correct-there were 2 lots of 3 chicks-good going. Let's hope they all survive.

Later, on the track to Opoutere Beach we saw 8 more dotterel (one with bands RM/KW), a Little Shag, Pied Shag, Caspian Tern, 38 Godwit, 4 White faced Heron, and a Kaka (flying). We heard, but did not see, a Banded Rail. On to Pauanui, Tairua, Hot Water Beach, Hahei, Cooks Beach and to Whitianga. Very few birds: probably too populated.

On Wednesday we drove North to Simpsons Beach; 2 N.Z.Dotterel, Otama Bay; 2 Californian Quail; and on to Opito Bay where there was another fenced area around a nest with 3 eggs-2 adult birds present. Over a narrow, winding metal road to Matapaua Bay where there was another N.Z.Dotterel nest with 2 eggs. At this point I discovered that my binoculars were missing, so we drove back to where we had stopped earlier, and there they were on the grass.

At Kuaotunu there were 4 adults and 3 chicks, at Matarangi 5 adults, and at Whangapoua 7 adults - obviously the NZ Dotterel are doing well down there. At Kennedy Bay we saw Caspian Tern 1, Black Shag 1, Pied Stilt 2, NZ Dotterel 2, VOC 70, BBG 10, and 25 Chaffinch.

The next day at Colville Bay we found NZ Dotterel 8, Banded Dotterel 2, VOC 49, Caspian Tern 2, Pied Stilt 3, Godwit 45, SIPO 94, White faced Heron 2. Heading back to Coromandel we saw under a bridge, what we thought were Brown Teal, and counted 50. Calling in to a little store we asked about these birds to be told- "Oh yes, there are a lot around here, and also at Port Charles where I live."

On our way home we stopped at Te Mata by the Tapu river where we saw 200+ Gannet, hundreds of White fronted Tern and a number of Shags- Little Black; Pied; and Spotted; all offshore. An enjoyable and informative birding week.

Janet & Claire.

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NZ – Northland Branch WHANGAREI REGION – Wetland/Lake/Pond survey

When Tony Beauchamp suggested that the branch survey local major bodies of water to establish the number and types of birds using them, Pauline Smith and Kevin Hayes volunteered to cover the JACK BISSET WETLANDS because Kevin had previous involvement with that property.

HISTORY OF PROPERTY:

During the 1970's the North Island Council of the Acclimatisation Societies had established, from a levy on the sale of licences to hunt, a fund to acquire and/or to enhance wildlife habitat and to provide facilities for recreational hunters (duck shooters).

The Whangarei Society (of which Kevin was Secretary) was advised by A. R. (Snow) Cochrane, a councillor, that a neighbour of his Poroti property was prepared to sell his land that was bounded by the Wairoa River and that part of it was prone to flooding. After inspection of the property by a Committee that included the Society President Trevor Ball and both Jack and Bill Bisset who had earthmoving experience, it was decided that there was a potential to create permanent wildlife ponds. The Whangarei Society, supported by the Dargaville, Kaitaia and Bay of Islands Societies, lodged an ultimately successful application for funding with the North Island Council.

Bunds were raised and islands created in the centre of several of the larger areas to provide nesting sites for waterfowl before the next big flood in the river which filled the ponds, so that the bunds retained that water from returning to the river once the flood subsided. With the meagre funds available to the Society, fencing materials were purchased and P.E.P. gangs used to fence off the pond margins and road. Some of our P.E.P. "workers" were more concerned with looking after the marijuana that they planted and hid among the gorse and scrub, giving our treasurer Jim Beazley who was trying to supervise them, a worrisome time. Progress was slow, but steady.

Initial errors included leasing the farmable land to a local who grossly overstocked the property with heavy cattle that pugged the sodden soil during the winter months and damaged the meagre fencing; using solar powered electric fencing units that became a "target" for our horticulturally minded wacky-backy growers, and being ill prepared for the massive influx of weed that thrived in the now warm, trapped water, leading to the optimistic introduction of the beetles as a natural control measure.

RECONNAISSANCE:

On the sunny 29 degree afternoon of 11th December 2009 we made an initial visit to identify suitable spots from which to observe and count birds using the wetland areas. The excellent condition of the internal road and the obviously effective farming practises of the Worsfold family on the upland area was a pleasant surprise.

Although the hilly to undulating land was dry, the wetlands are in superb condition with substantial areas of open water. Fencing is permanent, with electrified "stand-off" wires so care is needed. There was not a great variety of birdlife to be seen because we were there at the worst time of day to observe them, and intend to return soon at the evening feeding time.

Regardless of the above comment, there were numbers of Kingfisher, Skylark, Yellowhammer, Magpie, Spurwinged Plover and Tui flitting about. On the water we noted:

Mallard/cross	30+
White faced Heron	3
Domestic duck/cross	3
Paradise Shelduck	34+
Black Shag	4
Little Shag	6
Black Swan	76 plus a number of cygnets
Pheasant	3 Cock birds

This exercise will prove to be very interesting as we cover the different seasons.

Many thanks to Rudi Hoetjes and his staff for their assistance to us.

Kevin Hayes and Pauline R. Smith.

LAKES SURVEY - Summer 2009/2010

Jan 6th. 2010. Lake Waro, Hikurangi.

A fine summer morning. At 9a.m. there were 5 Grey Duck; 4 Scaup; 1 Little Shag; 1 Pukeko and 1 N.Z. Male swimming. Possibly this was why there were no dabchicks to be seen, as is usual. (A.W.)

Jan 23rd 2010 at Whau Valley Dam at 9a.m. there were 1 Little Shag; 1 Scaup; 5 Black Swan; 4 Grey Duck; 36 Mallard; and 1 Pukeko. (Claire.)

EAST COAST BEACH PATROL – BREAM BAY SUMMARY

Compiled by P. R. SMITH – Period JULY to DECEMBER 2009.....

MONTH	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT.	OCTOBER	NOV.	DEC	TOTAL
FROM	M. Pt.	Mair Rd.	M. Pt.	Mars. A	M. Pt.	Ruakaka R.	
TO	Waipu R.	Waipu R.	Waipu R.	Waipu R.	Waipu R.	Waipu R.	
DISTANCE	13km	12.5km	13.5km	..14.5km	13km	14.5km	
PATROLLERS	C.L. Burt J&L Snell	P. Cozens A. Williams	D. Carter H.van Weiri	J. Hawken P.Smith	C. Parkes K. Hayes	M. Smith	
Wandering Albatross							
Royal Albatross							
Black-browed Mollymawk							
White-capped (shy mollymawk)							
Grey-headed Mollymawk							
Buller's Mollymawk							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross							
Flesh-footed Shearwater					3		
Buller's Shearwater							
Sooty Shearwater							
Short-tailed Shearwater							
Fluttering Shearwater		5		2	1	2	
Hutton's Shearwater							
Little Shearwater		1					
Common Diving Petrel		1					
Black Petrel							
White-chinned Petrel							
Kerguelen Petrel							
Cape Pigeon							
Antarctic Fulmar							
Northern Giant Petrel							
Fairy Prion							
Thin-billed Prion							
Antarctic Prion							
Broad-billed Prion							
Lesser Broad-billed Prion							
Thrush							
Blue Petrel							
Pycroft's Petrel							
Cook's Petrel							
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel							
White-headed Petrel		1					
White-faced Storm Petrel	4						
Blue Penguin		22	1	2	1		
Australasian Gannet		4	3	4		1	
Pied Shag							
Paradise Shelduck							
Mallard duck							
Variable Oystercatcher							
Southern Black-backed Gull		2			3		
Red-billed Gull				1			
NZ Dotterel (Chick)							
Blackbird							
Australian Magpie		1		1			
Prion Sp.		2					
SUMMARY	4	39	4	10	8	3	68

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NZ – Northland Branch WHANGAREI HARBOUR – Shorebird survey

During a periodic survey of the One Tree Point-Marsden Point area by Pauline Smith and Kevin Hayes on the evening of 15th November 2009, an unusual noise was heard as we returned along the beach and passed under the Refinery jetty. The noise sounded like gulls, but was not a regular call, so we made our way through the vegetation on the foreshore toward the perimeter fence of the Refinery just north of the jetty gatehouse. While standing there and observing with binoculars, we could see two Pied Stilts on the over-flow from the stormwater catchment area, but no Gulls.

At this stage, the security guard came from the gatehouse and spoke to us. As it turned out Kevin knew him and during conversation, he advised us that the noise was an amplified distress call to deter gulls from using the wastewater area in case they introduced pollution. When we told him why we were there, he said that he had seen N.Z. Dotterel within the compound and suggested that we contact the Environmental Manager for the company to advise him of our interest in the presence of the birds.

A 'phone call to Mr Geoff Taylor led to his offer to ask his staff to count birds for us during their regular duties and we forwarded to him, a copy of the Dotterel Survey manual. Two of the Refining Company staff have volunteered to assist and we have received on 10th December, an email setting out the number and locations of birds seen within the sheltered habitat of the Refinery. The Company has an active predator control programme and this fact, supplemented by restricted human access to the area, provides a safe environment for N.Z. Dotterel, particularly during the nesting season.

SEPTEMBER 2009:

On 23 Sep 2009 Dotterel were seen at six locations during routine perimeter surveys that were not part of a full site survey.

- 2 x Adults and 2 x Chicks
- 2 x Adults on an internal road
- 1 x Adult (feeding)
- 1 x Adult (feeding)
- 2 x Adults (nesting)
- 1 x Adult on a tank bund wall

DECEMBER 2009:

- 5 Dec 09 4 x Adults
- 8 Dec 09 2 x Adults and 1 x Chick
- 8 Dec 09 2 x Adults
- 8 Dec 09 3 x Adults
- 10 Dec 09 3 x Adults
- 10 Dec 09 1 x Adult and 2 x eggs

All were seen at different locations and no banded birds were observed. Thanks to Donna Api and to Julie Edwards of N.Z. Ref. Co. for the recording.

Pauline Smith. 12th December 2009

O.S.N.Z. NORTHLAND CALENDAR. 2010

JANUARY: 23. WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
23. PUKENUI 5MIN. BIRD COUNTS.
26 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.

FEBRUARY: 11 MEETING.
23 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.
27 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
28 KAIPARA HARBOUR CENSUS.

MARCH 6 ~~WHANGAREI HARBOUR CENSUS.~~
11 MEETING.
13.14 FROGS-WAIPU. (Weather permitting.)
27 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
29 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.

APRIL: 8 MEETING.
24/25 MIST NETTING—(MAUNU) (weather permitting)
24 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
27 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.

MAY: 13 MEETING.
22 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
25 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.

JUNE: 5/6/7 O.S.N.Z. ANNUAL MEETING.
10 MEETING.
12 KAIPARA HARBOUR CENSUS. 10-14. 3.9M
19 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
20 ~~WHANGAREI HARBOUR CENSUS.~~
21 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.
JUNE/JULY MOREPORK CALLS.

JULY 8 MEETING.
23 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
26 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.

AUGUST 12 MEETING
22 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
23 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
SPOONBILLS— COLOUR COMBINATION-BANDS.

SEPTEMBER: 9 MEETING.

18 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
21 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.
SHINING CUCKOO RECORDS.

OCTOBER. (14) MEETING
16 WEST COAST BEACH PETROL
19 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL

BANDED RAIL SURVEY. (1/4 hour before dark for an hour)
CASPIAN TERN SURVEY. OCT/NOV.

NOVEMBER. (11) MEETING.
13 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL.
16 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.
27 WHANGAREI HARBOUR CENSUS 12.20

DECEMBER. 4. KAIPARA HARBOUR CENSUS. 10-00 4-0M
(9) END OF YEAR FUNCTION.
17 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
21 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL.

NATIONAL WADER CENSUS - NORTH KAIPARA

Compiled by David Crockett

Date: 7 June 2008 Tide Height: 4.1 m Time: 13.19 Weather: Fine. Northerly breeze.

	Boreks	Oneriri	Ngamom	Batley-Tanoa	Tinopal	Pahi-Whakapirau	Ruawai	Tangahae-Kellys Bay	Okaro Creek	TOTAL
Black shag				1						2
Pied shag			2	5		14				21
Little black shag				3						3
Little shag			3							3
White-faced heron				2		24				47
White heron							21			
Reef heron										
Royal spoonbill			32			16				48
SI pied oystercatcher		218	227	480	32	610	230	640		2437
Variable oystercatcher				6	9			2		17
Pied stilt				192		318	210	125		845
NZ dotterel				4						4
Banded dotterel		23		29						52
Wrybill						17				17
Pacific golden plover										
Spur winged plover		3					6			9
Turnstone										
Lesser knot										
Far-eastern curlew										
Asiatic whimbrel										
Bar-tailed godwit							6	5		11
Black-backed gull					4			4		8
Red-billed gull				3	13	145	97	14		272
Caspian tern			1	4		20		3		28
White-fronted tern			3	8	150	120		25		306
Fairy tern										
Little tern										
Cattle egret										
Black swan										
Black-billed gull								7		7
All banded.										
TOTAL		244	268	737	209	1284	570	825		4137

* *

Participants: C Burt D Calvert D Carter P Cozens D Crockett J Hawken
 S Plowman A Randell M Smith J Snell L Snell
 B Stevens J Vaughan A Williams P Yardley

