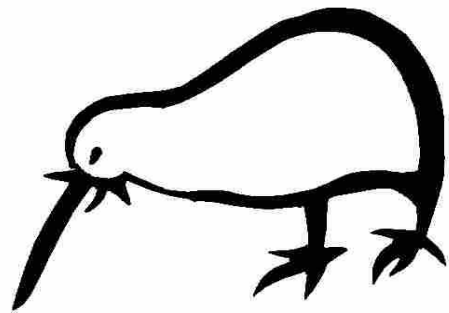


APTERYX

Issue 18

August 2007



NEWSLETTER OF THE FAR NORTH REGION OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND



Laughing
Kookaburra
(near Warkworth)
2 recent Far North
sightings

(All photos by
Detlef Davies
unless
otherwise
stated)



REGIONAL REP'S REFLECTIONS

We welcome our biggest influx of new members for some time, Dave Panckhurst & Bruce Collett both of Mangonui, Terry Higginson & Kevin Matthews both of Kaitaia, Sian Kendall & Margaret Cooper both of Kerikeri, Jan O'Boyle of Rawene & [Heather & Robb Campbell](#) of Broadwood. If I have left anyone out, I apologise & please make contact. Our Membership Secretary, Roger Sharp has resigned from the task because of other pressures and a replacement is being sought; there may be the odd blip in the meantime.

The long-awaited [Atlas of New Zealand Birds](#) was launched on 13 August and my copy arrived this morning (21 August). If yours has not arrived soon, let me know. It is not too late to get a free copy by joining the [Society](#), you just need to be a 2007 member.

There has been a delay in the issue of ['Notornis'](#) this year & the March issue was sent out with the June 'Southern Bird'. The June 'Notornis' should be out any day & the Sept issue should then be on time.

From time to time I circularise news by email such as programme changes, confirmation of times and meeting places of events, etc. If you do not have email, please give me a phone number so I can contact you with this information.

[Black-fronted Tern.](#)

One was seen on Karikari Beach in May. Look out for more. Photo from Swan Lagoon, South Island, Dec 2004



The Far North Regional Officers are:

Regional Representative & 'Apteryx' Editor

Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri
09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com

Regional Recorder

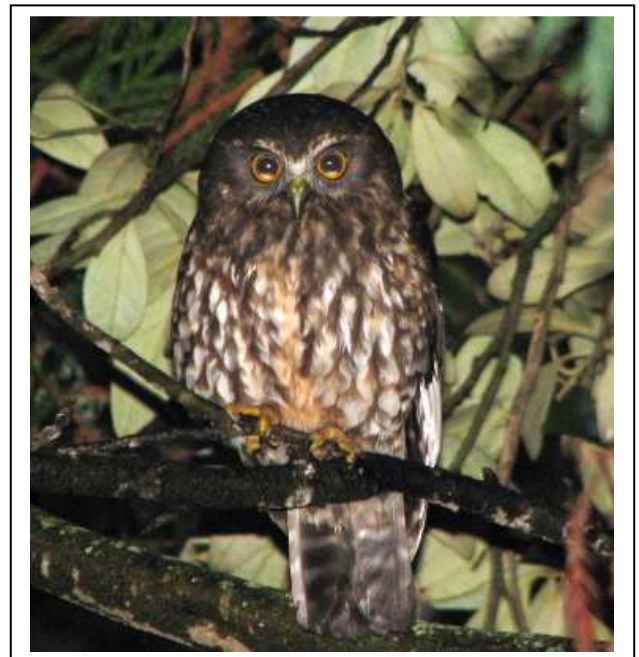
Laureen Alston, 48a Riverview Road, Kerikeri
09 407 8747 lm.alston@actrix.co.nz

Treasurer

Isabella Godbert, 67 Waipapa West Road, Kerikeri
09 407 8058 godbert@xtra.co.nz

Secretary & Publicity

Carol Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri
09 407 3874 carolanndavies@yahoo.com



This Morepork was photographed by Kevin Matthews at his home in Kaitaia on 15 July

RECENT EVENTS

25 May Far North AGM

It was decided to hold the AGM prior to the scheduled lecture tonight as the June date had become difficult for some of us. The minutes of the AGM are as follows:

Meeting took place at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri, commencing at 7.42 pm. 13 members and 2 non-members were present. Apologies received from Mike Bryan, Paul & Enid Asquith, Gay Blunden & Bill Campbell.

2006 AGM Minutes:- The minutes of the previous meeting were set out in the August 06 newsletter and were taken as read. There were no matters arising. Approval of minutes was proposed by Derry Godbert & seconded by Russell Thomas.

Regional Rep's Report: - Detlef gave a review of the last 12 months' indoor & field events including wader counts & beach patrols & with a special mention of the wader mistnetting weeks in September & January. Reports of interesting sightings should go to Laureen Alston as Regional Recorder & she will prepare this section of the newsletter as a Word document to be emailed to Detlef. Regional Rep's report proposed as accepted by Isabella Godbert & seconded by Derry Godbert.



If you think this picture might have been taken on the Thames upriver from London, . . . well you'd be wrong – these two Mute Swans have recently taken up residence on the Waipapa River & are still present as I write; they are very tame but unbanded.

Isabella gave her **Treasurer's Report**. The bank balance is steady and includes a sum specifically for boat costs for wader counts, this was largely untouched. The cost of producing the newsletter is mainly covered by 2 generous sponsors. Purchase of a compass for Kiwi monitoring & cost of repair to the Society's telescope out of club funds were approved. We should watch our advertising expenses, there are some free outlets. Acceptance of report proposed by Russell & seconded by Detlef.

Carol Davies reported on **publicity**, suggesting that the region should try to have a second venue for meetings in Kaitaia as there are several members there who are usually unable to get to Kerikeri. We should also try to advertise our meetings in the local paper as the Bay of Islands Travel Club do. Both these ideas will be taken further.

Election of Officers. There were no new nominations so the 4 current serving members were proposed by Russell Thomas to continue & seconded by Anthea Goodwin.

Programme for next 6 months. Members were asked for ideas. Anthea suggested a trip to [Tiritiri Island](#) which was well received (and has already been implemented). [Waipoua Forest](#) is also in our next programme and another visit to Warawara would also be popular, perhaps staying in Mitimiti & accessing a new area. Kerry suggested the McGregor Centre managed by the Forest Restoration Trust as somewhere to stay during a visit to Waipoua Forest.

'**Other business**' included a reminder about the [Garden Bird Survey](#) arranged by Eric Spurr followed by a suggestion from Kerry that as certain key people were present, we could have an update from Lynette Smith on Guardians of the Bay, Ian Wilson on [Puketi Trust](#) & [Ruth Marsh](#) on Aroha Island negotiations. All these were well received and the meeting then ended at 8.28 pm.

'A Little Boat on a Big Sea'

After the AGM, numbers swelled to 21 who we hope enjoyed Detlef & Carol's presentation on their New Year trip to the Chathams, Bounties & Antipodes Islands.

1 – 4 June OSNZ Conference & AGM

No Far North members made it to the Conference this year but Detlef attended the RRs Meeting on the Friday. Among matters discussed were the following:

The Society is to produce some laminated posters up to A3 size for advertising. These & more leaflets are to be distributed to RRs.

At present there is nobody analysing the results of beach patrols and nothing has been written for at least 3 years. We need somebody to undertake this task urgently and by the end of the meeting, Ian Armitage, the RR for Wellington offered to take on the job.

The proposed national site guide to which we have contributed is progressing slowly but some regions have yet to submit information. The publication is to be in map form.

Discussion took place on whether certain species which could be classed as the more regular rarities like Nankeen Kestrel & Sandplovers & Tattlers should continue to be considered by the Rare Birds Committee (after recent 'removal'). The 2 Tattlers & the 2 Sandplovers can give rise to identification problems & several recent Nankeen Kestrels follow many blank years. RRs therefore felt that they should be submitted & assessed.

Support was given to February wader counts (as well as November) where regions were able.

Conservation Award

Congratulations to Russell Thomas of Kerikeri for receiving a Northland Conservation Award. Russell has been an OSNZ member for over 40 years and taken part in numerous bird surveys and projects on many of New Zealand's offshore islands and in the Far North mainland.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

This covers the Far North region since mid-April. Prepared by **Laureen Alston**.

North Island Brown Kiwi Calls heard west arm Whangaroa Harbour on April 24 and 25. Usual sprinkling of sightings on Purerua & Rangitane areas. We look forward to hearing the results of recent Kiwi call monitoring.

Wandering Albatross One juv. 8nm SE of North Cape in July.

Shy Mollymawk One seen 5nm outside Cavalli Islands on July 27.

Common Diving Petrel 2 in outer Cavalli passage on April 27.

Black Shag One seen in Whangaroa Harbour on April 25.

Pied Shag 55 roosting at Urapukapuka Bay colony on July 25.

Little Shag 4 near beach at Urapukapuka Bay on July 25

Cattle Egret Flock of 61 seen in paddocks south of Waiharara on July 21.

White Heron One seen by the Narrows Ferry Ramp, Kohukohu on June 26.

Reef Heron One at Aroha Island on May 26; one on Cocked Hat Island, Kerikeri Inlet on June 1st; one inshore from Hat Island, Albert Passage, Bay of Islands.

Australasian Bittern One at Aroha Island causeway on 7 & 8 June; 2 at Whangatane Spillway, Kaitaia on 20 July.

Royal Spoonbill 6 seen at Aroha Island, 3 adults, 3 juveniles, on May 26 and later dates.

Mute Swan One pair seen on Waipapa River lagoon near Cherry House on August 1st. Seen again on later dates swimming downstream from Waipapa Basin and also in the Kerikeri Basin.

Brown Quail 12+ at Mountain's Estate, Purerua, on June 9.

Weka One reported from Kerikeri Golf Course in July.

Spotless Crake One seen, many responding to tape, at Mountain's Estate, Purerua, on June 9.

Variable Oystercatcher 6 on Hauai Beach, Rawhiti, on June 1st, also at other regular sites.

New Zealand Dotterel One pair with well coloured breeding plumage, chasing another male, at Urapukapuka Bay on July 25. Several sightings at Te Haumi, Paihia recently.

Arctic Skua 2 seen harassing 3 Fluttering Shearwaters, all birds on the surface of the water. 2 others flying, 1 light phase, near Motuarohia, Bay of Islands, on April 20.

Black-fronted Tern One roosting with NZ and Banded Dotterels on Karikari Beach on May 5 (Alison Stanes).

Kaka Two seen flying south of Mangamukas, Raetea Forest on June 16.

Morepork One at Kevin Matthews' home in Brott Road, Kaitaia on July 15 posed for a nice photo.

Laughing Kookaburra One seen on power line near Whangaroa junction with Hwy 10 on April 30; one seen on swimming pool fence in Silkwood Lane, Kerikeri on June 12.

Fernbird 4+ heard, 2 seen along Kawakawa River road on Jun 3; 4 seen at Mountain's Estate, 1 seen at Lake Ohia on June 9.

Tomtit One male in waterfall pools, Moturua Island on June 3.

Dunnock One in garden (Kerikeri) on July 15 during Detlef & Carol's Garden Bird Survey. This species is often overlooked.

Please send all interesting sightings in the Far North to Laureen Alston for inclusion in this section of the newsletter.

PROGRAMME

All Far North OSNZ indoor meetings take place at Detlef & Carol's house at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri unless otherwise stated, 7 pm for 7.30. We provide drinks & nibbles but contributions welcome.

Sat 15 Sept "Bird and pest surveys in Phoenix Islands and Kiritimati"

This is Ray Pierce's subject for our indoor meeting here, probably an unfamiliar topic to most of us so come and be enlightened about these tropical Pacific Islands. Ray is in Australia at present and in the unlikely event that he won't make it back here in time, we will have a 'Members Night' for which I have asked a few longer-standing members to talk about their particular bird-orientated pet subjects.

29 – 30 Sept Weekend trip to [Tiritiri Matangi Island](#)

This may be booked up by the time you receive this newsletter but please check in case there is room. Other OSNZ regions often arrange overnight stays here. Those coming should contact Detlef about travel arrangements.

November Wader Count

Our 3 times yearly visit to the northern estuaries & mudflats will hopefully take place one weekend this month depending on weather, tide times, boat-availability & manpower.

Forest & Bird Lecture

On a day in November (date to be confirmed) Ewen Cameron, the Curator of Botany at Auckland Museum, will give a lecture to Far North Forest & Bird at Wharepuke Hall, Kerikeri. Details from Margaret Cooper: 09 407 8570.

Fri 14 Dec Members night / Christmas Social

If the September meeting goes ahead as planned, then we will have the Members Night tonight with a variety of members contributions. If not, I will think of a 'Plan C'.

Fri 18 Jan 2008 Borneo

Detlef & Carol will give a presentation on their recent trip to Sabah in Borneo, a wonderful tropical rainforest destination. There is a preview on page 8.

Other forthcoming events:

Waipoua Forest: - we hope to organise a weekend trip here this coming summer, some time from October onwards. Timing will depend on when Kokako monitoring takes place, it would be good to be involved in this.

Spitzbergen & the High Arctic. Ian & June Wilson have been to the global 'Far North' recently & have agreed to give a talk early next year.

Tiritiri Matangi Island: - we will book a weekend here again if enough people would like to go, probably in March or later.

BEACH PATROLS

These take place every 4th Sunday at 90 Mile Beach and less frequently on Karikari Peninsular. More volunteers would be welcome. Please contact Isabella Godbert on 09 407 8058 or John Dawn on 09 407 8658 for details. Recent results may not be available until the end of the year.

WADER COUNTS – JULY 2007

Unfortunately we were unable to carry out our winter wader count at Parengarenga and Rangaunu Harbours because the rough weather prevented us from getting boats out to Kokota Sandspit and to Walker Island. However, Kevin Matthews managed to get to Kaimaumau on 21 July and counted the following by pointing his telescope towards Walker Island:

New Zealand Dotterel 6

Pied Stilt 18

Variable Oystercatcher 28

Bar-tailed Godwit 140 (this may include some Knot but too far away to separate)

Caspian Tern 9

White-fronted Tern 6 (& numerous Red-billed & Black-backed Gulls).

The next Wader Count is due in November when better weather has been ordered! The main influx of Arctic waders is expected in late September so we hope for an enjoyable weekend's counting & band & flag-spotting. More info will follow by email circular.

SOUTHERN CONTRASTS

By Lauren Alston

I recently had a short trip to Nelson at the invitation of OSNZ Nelson Branch member Willie Cook, to experience some birding in the north of the South Island.

Several times we went out to Bell's Island, site of the local sewage ponds and waded across to a large shell bank on which the local OSNZ branch is doing vegetation improvement and uses as a wader monitoring site. Flocks of up to 65 wrybills in breeding plumage were making their way south to their breeding grounds on the braided rivers. Other counts were 250 godwits and 80 variable oystercatchers, almost all completely black in contrast to our more 'variable' black and white ones. Also seen were turnstone, South Island pied oystercatchers, pied stilts, banded dotterels, spoonbills, black-fronted and caspian terns, red-billed and black-billed gulls and about 70 grey teal swimming just offshore. At least 11 bands and flags were spotted and recorded. All this within half an hours drive from Nelson!

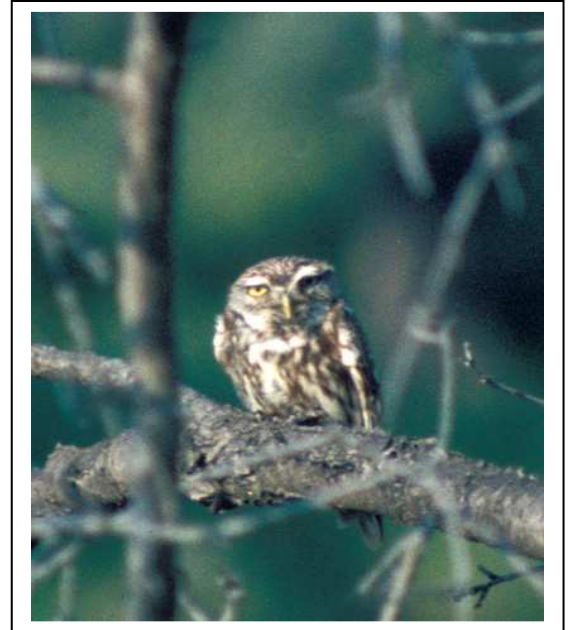
A complete contrast was a tramp up to the Mt Arthur Hut in the western ranges the morning after a good snowfall. Certainly a first for me to be walking in about 10cm of powder over older packed snow, surrounded by snow covered bush looking like Christmas card pictures. We saw several weka wandering about leaving interesting footprint patterns and one even tried to make off with a walking pole!

The beech forests with their riflemen, tomtits and brown creepers make a great change and back in the open, flocks of finches, including redpolls with their breeding plumage of bright pink breasts, crowded the heaps of apple waste put out for cattle.

After dark we heard the harsh call of a little owl outside the window, so different from any of the noises made by moreporks. The Otago Acclimatisation Society introduced little owls from Germany in the early 1900s and they are now widespread in the South Island.



Above: Laureen's photo of a Weka in the snow at Mount Arthur
Right: Little Owl (Greece, 1982)



A note from Kerry & Jane Walshe

QUEENSLAND'S DAINTREE RAINFOREST

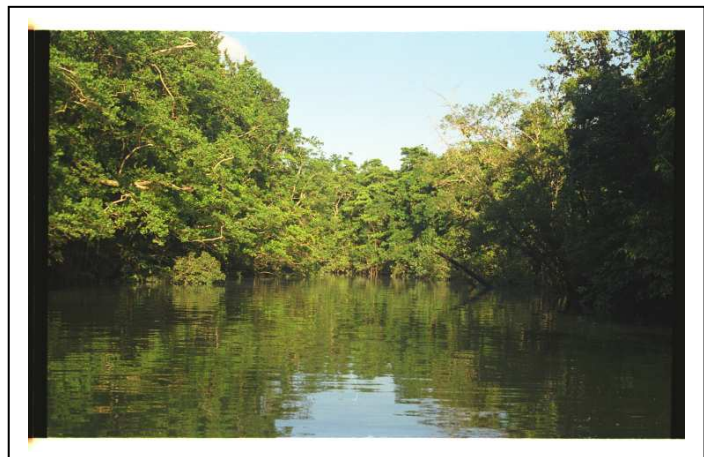
Animal behavioural scientists warn us against equating animal behaviour with human behaviour . However there are times when you do wonder.

Recently Jane and I spent a week in Port Douglas. While there we took a day tour into the rain forest. Part of the trip involved "croc spotting" at a place called Coopers Creek. Our boatman/guide pointed out the sights of interest. One was a little Sunbirds nest hanging out over the tidal mangrove creek, a bit like a gray warblers. Our guide told as the following story. He and his wife were sitting in their home one evening and heard a noise at the window. They looked up and saw a sunbird there, tapping at the window. They went outside to check and found a tree snake trying to get at the sunbirds nest. They collected up the snake, put it in a box and released it away from the property. For the next few days, every time the wife went out of the house the sunbird would accompany her, seemingly in gratitude.

Back to start. Animal Behavioural Scientists warn usetc but you do wonder.



Yellow-bellied Sunbird, a familiar bird in N Queensland (Below) Rainforest at the Daintree River (DD, April 1999)



BIRDING IN BORNEO

Detlef and Carol Davies

We spent over 3 weeks in Borneo in July & August this year, having been tempted with the variety of birds seen by friends who have been there several times. We were in the Malaysian province of Sabah in the north of the island where the forest is still quite extensive and accessible. From the city of Kota Kinabalu we began our trip in Mount Kinabalu National Park. During the 9 days we spent here we put aside 2 days to climb the awesome Mount Kinabalu which at 4,095 metres is higher than Mount Cook but you can reach the summit as a tourist without any sophisticated mountaineering equipment.

The mountain had a small selection of special birds but the lowland rainforest we visited later had a greater variety and we enjoyed some amazingly colourful Pittas, extraordinary Hornbills of 6 species, the very difficult Bornean Ground Cuckoo, the rare Storm's Stork, some unusual birds of prey such as the Bat Hawk & the tiny White-fronted Falconet, and lots of Babblers, Sunbirds, Spiderhunters, Flycatchers, etc. We had a rest from constant walking of trails when we got to the Kinabatangan River where nearly all the birding was from a river boat.

Three days on [Mantanani Island](#) offshore allowed us some snorkeling and kayaking as well as seeing 3 species of Frigatebird and the special Mantanani Scops Owl. Finally we had a day's sightseeing in Brunei before heading home.



Storm's Stork
Black & Red Broadbill
Buffy Fish Owl
Rhinoceros Hornbill

