

The Wrybill

**Newsletter of the Canterbury Region,
Ornithological Society of New Zealand**

Regional representative: Jan Walker
305 Kennedys Bush Road, Christchurch 8025
Ph 03 322 7187. Email: shesagreen@gmail.com



June 2011

**What's on at OSNZ Canterbury:
June to December 2011**

Indoor Meetings

Evening Meetings take place at 7.30pm on the last Monday of the month at the Mahaanui Area DOC office, 31 Nga Mahi Drive, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Plenty of parking is available.

MONDAY 27th June: Andrew Crossland will talk about habitat changes brought about by the earthquakes in areas important for birds around the city such as Bexley, Charlesworth, Styx River, Avon Estuary etc.

MONDAY 25th July: Mike Bell from Blenheim, RR of the Marlborough Branch, talking about the work he and others have been doing on the Chathams.

MONDAY 29th August: James Fraser of Nose for Conservation will tell us about training dogs to find different birds and predators.

MONDAY 26th September: Don Geddes from Ashburton talking about the Snares Islands – the closest of the sub-antarctic islands.

MONDAY 31st October: David Melville, wader specialist and OSNZ Councillor has been doing more interesting work in the Arctic breeding grounds of Alaska.

MONDAY 28th November: Bruce McKinley, OSNZ Vice-President will be talking about Yellow-Eyed Penguins and their conservation status. They used to breed on Banks Peninsula and they may be the most threatened of the penguins.

Field Meetings

SAT 16th July: Ashburton Lakes Waterbird Count. An early start is needed, usually from the carpark of the Islington Tavern just beyond Hornby on the Main South Rd. Contact Ron Nilsson kokakodreaming@paradise.net.nz 942 6484 or Bev Alexander birdiebev@xtra.co.nz 03 313 7009 for more details.

There will be a less demanding fieldtrip closer to Christchurch also programmed for sometime in July.

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Details to be announced later.

SAT 20th Aug: Mystery Trip in the Council Minibus. Perhaps around North Christchurch wetlands. More details later. Contact Jan shesagreen@gmail.com 322 7187

SAT 17th Sept: Welcome to the waders at Brighton [Southshore] Spit. See which birds have arrived in the spring migration. This trip depends on tide times. Contact Nick nick_allen@xtra.co.nz 358 5994

FRI/SAT/SUN 14th/15th/16th Oct: A weekend in a cottage overlooking Hart's Creek Wildlife Refuge at Lake Ellesmere. Or come on Saturday for the day. BITTERNS! GREBES! TERNS! Contact Bev birdiebev@xtra.co.nz 03 313 7009

SAT 5th Nov: Banks Peninsula Reserves Survey. Return trip in the breeding season to "Oashore" near Little River, a bush covenant visited recently and to Magnet Bay Reserve nearby. Contact Jan shesagreen@gmail.com 322 7187

SAT 19th Nov: Ashley Riverbed Bird Survey. Meet 9am South side of Rangiora-Loburn bridge over the Ashley River. No gumboots. Prepare for wet feet. Bring spare clothes and binoculars, lunch and drink. Hats, sunscreen etc. Car pooling from Belfast Tavern at the beginning of the Northern Motorway at 8.30am. Contact Eric Spurr spurreb@slingshot.co.nz 03 313 8283 or Bev birdiebev@xtra.co.nz 03 3137009

SAT 3rd Dec: Wader Count Lake Ellesmere. Followed by Xmas BBQ at Cherry and Colin's farm in Wolfes Rd. Meet 9am at far end of Embankment Rd, Greenpark. More details to follow.

Droppings from the Regional Rep

On Monday evening 21st February 2011 we had dinner with Keith Woodley and his partner in Spagalimis and members were afterwards enthralled by Keith's talk about his Alaskan trip to see breeding Godwits. 24 hours later much of Christchurch had no electric, phone, water, road or sewage connections, and many buildings had crumbled so badly they destroyed people and much of the city's civic life.

By the time you read this it will be nearly 4 months since then and while life for many has returned to almost the same, for thousands more it will never resume in that way. We were very grateful for offers of help from members in other regions and very touched by the number of Council members and other RRs who sent their best wishes and humour.

The March meeting, which also happened to

be the local AGM was comfortably held in the ladies locker room of the Burnside Bowling Club. Thanks to Bev's many relatives, we have lots of possibilities. Several people also entertained us with their trip reports.

There have been changes to the bird habitats of Christchurch which we are still finding out about. One side of the estuary has risen, while the other has sunk. The broken sewage system has meant that increased organic pollution in the rivers and estuary has attracted thousands and thousands of filter-feeding ducks, spoonbills and opportunists like gulls.

Large parts of East Christchurch wetlands have become a lot wetter and raupo beds are forming which may be excellent for those wetland species like Bitterns and Crakes which have been declining locally. All this is really most exciting for wildlife; if we can make enough noise about it, a more enlightened planning process may not flatten and drain it all once again.

The new programme is included above. We are

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back at the DoC Area office for evening meetings and have some interesting ones in the calendar. Two of them are postponements from the January programme. Another minibus twitchathon daytrip is planned for this winter, following on from the success of last year's one. The annual Xmas BBQ finishes 2011 at Cherry and Colin's Fenland Farm at Lake Ellesmere.

Jan Walker

Recent Sightings

December: 30th Jan, Sheila, Bev and Tom saw 100 Godwits, 60+ Spotted Shags and numerous Black-billed Gulls at Ashworth Spit. Ashley Estuary held 5 Wrybills, 2 Turnstones, 1 Knot, Godwits, Variable, Hybrid and Pied Oystercatchers, Grey Teal, Banded Dotterels with young, 200+ White-fronted Terns, and 1 Caspian Tern. Also the banded Black Stilt had returned from summering up-river with a possible chick which looked "more Black Stilt than Pied Stilt."

January: On the 4th, Sheila and Jan spent 3 hours at Jarvis Road. There were 43 Golden Plovers (probably Pacific Golden Plovers), 10 Turnstones, 2 Knots, 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, 9 PECTORAL Sandpipers, 14 Red-necked Stints and probably something like 1000 Wrybills. At Embankment Road there were another 7 Turnstones, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit and an Orange-flagged Banded Dotterel (banded in Victoria). Peter Langlands was concerned about the possible lack of juveniles in White-fronted Tern flocks. Between Embankment and Greenpark Colin and Steve found 12 Turnstones, 360 Wrybills, approximately 400 Banded Dotterels, 2 Hybrid Stilts, 17 Bar-tailed Godwits, approximately 40 Asiatic Golden Plovers in flight and approximately 400 Pied Stilt. On the 2nd Phil Crutchley and Andrew were at the DOC ex-sand mining reserve on Kaitorete Spit and saw feeding offshore 3000 Hutton's Shearwaters, 38 Sooty Shearwaters, 6 Arctic Skua, 260+ White-fronted Terns, 1 Black-fronted Tern, 1 Caspian Tern, 17 Gannets, 3 White-flipped Penguins and hundreds of Spotted Shags and Black-backed Gulls. On the

11th at Kaitorete Spit they found 1 Sharpie/Pectoral Sandpiper, 2 Turnstones, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, 36 Red Knots, 23 Red-necked Stints, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit, 200+ Wrybills and 20 Caspian Terns. Jonathon Palmer, resident of Prices Valley, reported a NZ Falcon feeding off the ubiquitous rock pigeons there. On the 15th Colin and Steve found 97 Wrybills, 24 Caspian Terns, 3 Black-fronted Terns, 5 Bar-tailed Godwits, 37 Red Knots, 7 Turnstones, 200 Banded Dotterels (one with an orange flag above the right knee), 26 Red-necked Stints, 2 Curlew Sandpipers, 4 Pectoral Sandpipers and 1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Kaitorete Spit; 123 Banded Dotterels, 36 Bar-tailed Godwits, 8 Wrybills and 200 Pied Stilts at Greenpark; 80 Wrybills and 250 Pied Stilts at Jarvis and 76 Banded Dotterels and 35 Wrybills at Embankment Road. On 16th Andrew reported an Australian Wood Duck at Bromley Sewage Ponds' experimental algae pond, and a moulting Crested Penguin species at Magnet Bay, Banks Peninsula. Thanks to a photo taken by Kenny Rose it could be identified as a juvenile Erect Crested Penguin. Andrew also reported Yellow-eyed Penguin chicks were doing well at Otanerito and Goughs Bay. Sue



Photo: Kenny Rose
Erect Crested Penguin, Magnet Bay

Stubenvoll had regular evening visits from Native Pigeons gorging on cherry plums. Sue Lovatt still had Shining Cuckoos at Robinson's Bay on the 21st and Jan and Sheila heard two singing in Victoria Park and another on Mitchells Track, Port Hills. Andrew Crossland forwarded reports of a Golden Pheasant seen by Niall Muga in Reynolds Valley Road and another in the upper Puaha Valley seen by the Local Historian at Little River, Banks Peninsula.

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From Yarrs to Greenpark, Ellesmere, Colin and Steve's sightings included 702 Banded Dotterels, 2 Hybrid Stilts, 6 Turnstones, 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and 77 Wrybills. And on the 31 January two Yellowheads were seen by Warren Jowett at Hawdon Shelter, Arthur's Pass.

February: At Avon-Heathcote Estuary Andrew counted 3546 SIPO, 68 VOC, 296 Pied Stilts, 113 S/W Plovers, 105 Banded Dotterels, 2 Black-fronted Dotterels, 1 Wrybill, 1 Turnstone and 1918 Bar-tailed Godwits and at Brooklands Lagoon 169 SIPO, 4 VOC, 54 Pied Stilts, 38 S/W Plovers, 52 Banded Dotterels, 3 Black-fronted Dotterels, 1 Asian Wimbrel and 87 Bar-tailed Godwits. Jan and Ann Sherlock, alerted by insistent calling, saw a young Shining Cuckoo being fed by very busy "parent" warblers on the Tawharanui Track, Victoria Park, in the Port Hills. Sue Lovatt saw 2 gannets in Robinson's Bay/Kakamatua. On the 12th Sheila, Tom, Ron Simons (Seattle) and Jan visited Hart's Creek finding 26 Crested Grebes (8 juvenile), 3 Coots, a pair of Mute Swans with a juvenile and 1 Caspian Tern among more common birds. 19th Colin and Steve found 9 Pectoral Sandpipers at Ellesmere between Yarrs and Embankment, some showing territorial behaviour - extended neck posture and at Clarkes 125 Wrybills, 33 Red-necked Stints, 1 Curlew Sandpiper and 1 Sharpie. At the Ashley Estuary, Bev and Peter Reese reported 1 Far Eastern Curlew and 2 Wimbrels and a day later on 20th Nick Allen found a female Far Eastern Curlew in bright breeding plumage, 4 Royal Spoonbills and the regular Black Stilt. On 28th Steve and Colin found 4 Pectoral Sandpipers and 22 Red-necked Stints at Clarkes while Embankment-Jarvis held ~778 Banded Dotterels, ~1290 Pied Stilts, 29 Asiatic Golden Plovers and 180 Wrybills.

March: 10th in glorious light Ann and Stephane Popinet saw 17 Royal Spoonbills at Ashley Estuary. Luke Martin had his spirits lifted by the sight of a Kotuku at Bridge Street bridge, New Brighton. 13th Andrew saw a Glossy Ibis at Travis Wetland after seeing one at Bexley Wetlands half an hour before, confirming there are 2 in the

Christchurch area. 15th he saw a Glossy Ibis flying south from the direction of Kaiapoi oxidation ponds, raising the question as to whether there may be a third bird here. Colin and Steve reported Jarvis/Clarkes and Embankment held 319 Banded Dotterels, 271 Pied Stilts, 3 Curlew Sandpipers (2 in breeding plumage), 2 Pectoral Sandpipers, 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, 96 Wrybills and 11 Red-necked Stints, some very near full summer plumage. Sheila, Bev and Jan saw 50 Spoonbills at Pleasant Point Yacht Club with more arriving all the time, possibly from the old outfall at the settling ponds. 18th Jan reported a dark phase Arctic Skua off the tip of the spit, New Brighton. 24th Jan and Bev's visit to Embankment, Clarkes and Jarvis revealed 2 Pacific Golden Plovers in brilliant breeding plumage, 6 Red-necked Stints, 1 in breeding plumage, 180 Wrybills, approximately 50 White-faced herons (unusually high numbers for this area), 2 Mute Swans and 3 Cape Barren Geese as well as 1000's of ducks (mostly Grey Teal), 100's of Banded Dotterels and Pied Stilts and lots of Cormorants. 25th Ann saw a White Heron at Pegasus Township wetland (on left of road leading to beach). 29th Colin reported Jarvis-Greenpark held 124 Banded Dotterels, 743 Pied Stilts, 161 Wrybills, 14 Red-necked Stints, most coloured up and 3 Curlew Sandpipers, 2 coloured up. At our end of month meeting, reports were given of 130 Spoonbills at Avon estuary (Andrew), 2 Cattle Egrets at Drains Road which have probably summered over (Bev/Jan), a Red-crowned Parakeet at Church Bay (Arthur Dixon), and 6 Brown Creeper at Talbot Forest, Geraldine, a White Heron at Ashburton Lakes and 2 Falcons above the stone bluffs at Hakatere (Peter Howden).

April: 3rd Peter Langlands observed a White-winged Tern at Taumutu, Lake Ellesmere. Sheila had a call from a woman who saw a White Heron at Jellie Park in the City. Jill West found 20 Turnstones at Kaikoura. 5th Bev counted a new high of 25 Royal Spoonbills at Ashley Estuary. 16th Peter L achieved his highest count of 8 Reef Herons, including 2 juveniles, at Kaikoura. 22nd Colin and Steve's count between Embankment and Jarvis totalled 124 Spur-winged Plovers, 8 Mute Swans, 53 Spoonbills, 55 Banded Dotterels, 594 Pied Stilts, 85 Wrybills, 3 Red-necked Stints, 1 Caspian Tern and 2 Cape Barren Geese. Single

White Heron sightings were reported from Taranaki Creek 4th, Kaituna Lagoon 6th, Drain Road and Timberyards 22nd and Ashley Estuary 21st. Niall Mугan found 3 White-winged Black Terns, a Curlew Sandpiper, 25 Knots and 25 Godwits, one in breeding plumage, off the end of Lake Ellesmere spit.

May: 2nd Jill Hanna saw a Turnstone at Ashley Estuary. 5th Grahame found a Wood Duck at Horseshoe Lake, Christchurch. We suspect it is the one Andrew found in January at the sewage farm. By the 24th the bird had gone but a lot of keen birders and photographers had been to see him. Andrew reported 3 Bittern sightings within a week in the Brooklands Lagoon area, due, he feels, to elevated water levels from recent earthquakes turning weedy riverbanks and tidal saltmarsh (especially Styx Rivermouth wetlands) into what he hopes will become a vast raupo swamp. 11th Peter Halford reported having had Grass Whistling Ducks on his farm at Fox Glacier for the past couple of months. 22nd Keith and Maeve Harrison saw 9 Black-fronted Dotterel at South Pond, Ashworth Beach. 25th Jack Davidson counted 12 Cattle Egrets in the Arahura and White Herons have been seen perched on roofs in Hokitika. Another 7 Cattle Egrets were reported near Westport. A dead Morepork was found in the Botanic Gardens by gardener Luke Martin. 29th Sheila saw 25 Cattle Egrets on Lake Road near Drains Road, 1 White Heron on Drain Road and 2 in Johnstons Bay Road and Crested Grebes here and there on the Lake. 29th Niall Mугan saw 9 White Herons eating young eels along the Christchurch to Akaroa Road near Kaituna in a pond next to the road trail. Colin Hill had a brief sighting of a very pale bittern on his property.



Photo: Ann Sherlock
Lake Henrietta, one of the small high country lakes surveyed on the field trip in March.

The Inaugural Farewell to the Hutton's Shearwaters

I am fortunate to have some friends who now live in Kaikoura and who are also keen birders and astronomers. So on the first weekend of April, I travelled to Kaikoura to visit them and attend the Hutton's Shearwater Farewell. The official parts of the weekend didn't begin until Saturday evening so we had time to do some exploring and observing during the day on Saturday. We walked along Jimmy Armer's beach looking for the Turnstones and eventually tracked them down at the far end of the beach on the rock platform turning over seaweed to get the animals hiding amongst it. There were about 20 of them and the males were in spectacular breeding plumage; it was very windy and their feathers were being ruffled constantly by the wind showing off the rich chestnut colour. They were fun to watch as they busily potted about continually seeking food.



Photo: Ann Sherlock
Turnstone, Kaikoura

We observed behaviour of two white-faced herons that I had not seen before. They were approaching each other strutting forwards with bills pointing to the sky (rather like bitterns). As they got nearer to each other, one would back off and walk away and as soon as that happened, the other one would start following it again. We watched this routine for a while and eventually they moved apart. My friend had seen this behaviour in the same place a few weeks ago and the birds had actually begun fighting by jumping up and kicking the other bird. Apparently this went on for some time until one finally moved on.

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In the afternoon we travelled up the coast to Ohau point to look at the seals; many young ones were playing in the rock pools. We walked up the Ohau Creek track to the waterfall and as we were returning to the car, four young seal pups came rushing up the creek chasing each other and calling out. They seemed to be having a race and took no account of us beside the stream as they swam by and clambered over the boulders, presumably on the way to the plunge pool beneath the falls. It was a treat to observe this activity.

In the evening a number of supporters and Friends of Hutton's assembled for a dinner at a local restaurant after which most of us joined a "Kaikoura Night Sky" event run by Hussein. He took us in a small bus to a site on the peninsula with an excellent view of a fabulously clear night sky. We were able to view several star clusters and were shown signs of the Zodiac visible at the time. The last object we looked at was the planet Saturn which was showing the rings very well and we could see two of the 38 moons that surround it. Altogether this was a very worthwhile excursion and I recommend it.

On Sunday morning at 6:45 (thankfully we had put our clocks back that morning) about 60 people assembled at the reserve in South Bay for the Farewell Ceremony. The ceremony began with a karakia by Bret Cowie, a DOC officer and local Maori Elder. He spoke in fluent Maori and then translated briefly what he had said which was a welcome to everyone and of course mentioned the reason we were all there. We were told that the walk to the colony would take about 20 minutes and then we were to collect from a bag a feather to hold until the appropriate moment at the colony. We entered at the top of the colony through a gate in the predator-proof fence and were told a little about the materials in the fence and the reasons for the different parts of it. The mesh in the lower part of the fence is small enough to exclude mice (even baby mice) and is folded and buried outwards from the fence for some distance so nothing can dig under it. The top part is a larger mesh which excludes cats, rats and mustelids and along the top is an outward facing curve of metal to prevent animals jumping over. There was another brief speech by Bret in Maori which was the farewell and then we all let the feathers

fly off into the wind as a symbolic gesture for flying away.

After this we were shown a couple of the nest boxes and it was explained that for some time into the future nest boxes will have to be used in this colony as the soil is far too hard for any birds to dig their own burrows. Each nest box has a short tunnel made from plastic novaflo pipe and the end that is the entrance is alongside or just below the box.

Once everyone had had a chance to see the nest boxes we all walked back down the hill and then drove to the Kaikoura coastguard headquarters where we were treated to a lovely bacon, eggs and sausages barbeque breakfast followed by tea and coffee. After everyone had eaten there was a short talk about the Trust and we were shown a few pictures of results obtained from dataloggers that had been tracking movements of individual birds as they migrated from the East coast of NZ to Australia. Most of them seemed to congregate around Northern Queensland or the top northern corner of Western Australia and a few were tracked around the south coast perhaps on the way back to NZ. The big surprise for everyone was that there were 2 live Hutton's Shearwaters for people to see; one had landed in Kaikoura and the other in a car sales yard in Christchurch on the Thursday night. This fledgling had been brought to Kaikoura by Geoff Harrow in a cat box and had been fed several sardine smoothies before it was shown to the supporters. It had a good weight and was very lively and was to be released at sea that afternoon.

This was a very enjoyable weekend and I hope to be able to go to the first welcome back ceremony to be held in September 2011.

Jill West

Members Matters

Polly Scofield was born on 14 January 2011. Congratulations to Paul, Kristen and Mattie. See photo p.7

And congratulations also to Andrew, Lia and Xavier on the birth of Chelsea Isabella, born 24 March 2011. (Apologies - no photo)



Photo: Kristen
Polly's arrival

Field Trip to Peacock Springs

The reason I decided to go on this field trip was because I thought it would be interesting and important for me to know which New Zealand native birds live and are bred at Peacock Springs as well as further building my understanding and knowledge of certain New Zealand native birds. I also went there to generally learn and remember important facts about the place.

This field trip was on Wednesday, 11th May, 2011 and lasted about 2 ½ hours. 16 members of OSNZ attended, headed by Jan Walker, the Regional Rep, who organised and kept track of us so we kept together as a group. We were shown round by a worker called Emma and occasionally were given additional information by Ann Richardson as she was feeding the birds.

The New Zealand native birds I observed at Peacock Springs were the Kaka, Blue Duck, Brown Teal, Orange Fronted Parakeet, Red Crowned Parakeet, Black Stilt and Shore Plover. Tuatara are also bred there but we were unable to see them as they were hibernating. We also observed some introduced birds. There were Indian Peafowl and Cape Barren Geese in paddocks and Mute Swan and Mallard Duck on the many ponds created by gravel extraction.

First we walked around outside aviaries containing Red Crowned and Orange Fronted

Parakeet, a Brown Teal pair with their young and Blue Duck. In one aviary we were able to go inside and get very close to 6 female Brown Teal.

Later we travelled around in several vehicles to observe more native birds and listen to the information given by our two guides. The Kaka prefers the larger tracts of native forest and its conservational status is endangered. Most of the members and I also took photos of the New Zealand native birds. I sadly couldn't get a decent shot of the Kaka though, which was my favourite bird.

We were allowed into the aviary of two male Shore Plover and got an excellent view of them. It is a very large aviary with water, stones and native vegetation. All the aviaries are designed to make the birds feel as though they are in their natural environment. The Shore Plover inhabits sandy beaches, but it has also been known to inhabit rocky headlands around pools of water and its conservation status is endangered. Another aviary held a breeding pair of Shore Plover. After successful breeding the young birds are sent to a predator free island off the coast off Fiordland.



Photo: Peter Langlands
Shore Plover, Peacock Springs

The Red Crowned Parakeet inhabits heavy native forest on offshore islands. It is most likely extinct on the mainland and its conservation status is vulnerable. The Orange Fronted Parakeet is known to exist in deep native forest in the Hurunui Valley and the Hawdon Valley and is critically endangered.

The Black Stilt is found mainly in some lakes and braided rivers in the Mackenzie basin and also exists in South Canterbury and its conservation

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status is critically endangered. The large aviaries at Peacock Springs held several breeding pairs and about 8 young birds at the moment. The eggs are sent to be incubated at Twizel while the breeding pair sit on a dummy egg. When the chicks are a few days old they are returned to Peacock Springs to be looked after by the adult birds until they are old enough to be released back into the wild.

The Blue Duck inhabits freshwater rivers with nearby forest and its conservation status is endangered. Eggs from nesting pairs in the wild are sent to Ann Richardson by DOC and she raises them by hand. She told us she was worried about the decline in the number of eggs she receives.

Until recently Brown Teal were found only in freshwater rivers on offshore islands. Its conservation status is endangered. They are now being reintroduced on to the mainland. In one area of Peacock Springs we saw a lot of young Brown Teal waiting to be packed into crates to be sent to a location on the North Island.

I am a Secondary School Student and feel privileged to have gone to Peacock Springs. The variety of New Zealand birds I observed there I thought was simply extraordinary. All the people are very passionate about New Zealand native birds so it was great being around them. It was also fantastic learning about the place as well as learning more about New Zealand native birds. I feel that it was essential for me to go there for the sake of my future career, which I hope will be working for DOC in some way. It would be great to go there again and see the rest of the aviaries and learn more about the work being done to try to save our endangered native birds.

Harrison Stringer

Dr Mike Imber

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Dr Mike Imber. He was a world authority on seabirds and along with a group of others was involved currently in the search for the breeding areas of the recently rediscovered New Zealand Storm Petrel.

I worked with him on the Chatham Islands in the days when searches were being done to find the burrows of the Chatham Island Taiko. We spent many happy trips on this mission, capturing birds at night, fitting them with transmitters and then listening out for the signals on following nights in different parts of the coast on the main island. Together we searched for the breeding areas of the Chatham Petrel on Rangatira (SE Island) and followed the outcomes of the few breeding burrows known at that time.

I was involved in a long term study on Whenua Hou (Codfish Island) monitoring the recovery of both Cook's Petrels and Mottled Petrels after removal of wekas and possums (and later the kiore). Mike and I set up the study burrows which we then followed for about 10 years in the 1980s and early 1990s. From Mike, I learned most of what I know about these small gadfly petrels and it was he who opened the opportunity for me last year to visit Gau Island in Fiji in the quest for the breeding areas of the Fiji petrel. He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

Jill West

Canterbury Region Contacts

Regional Representative: Jan Walker
305 Kennedys Bush Rd, Christchurch 8025
E: shesagreen@gmail.com P: 322 7187

Secretary: Nick Allen
11 Seagrave Place, Burnside, Christchurch
E: nick_allen@xtra.co.nz P: 358 5994

Regional Recorder: Bev Alexander
63 Golding Ave, Rangiora 7400
E: birdiebev@xtra.co.nz P: 03 313 7009

Treasurer: Sue Stubenvoll
Brenchley Farm, Brenchley Rd, Lyttleton
E: sue@creativelogic.co.nz P: 328 8835

The Wrybill Editor: Ann Sherlock
102b Knowles Street, St Albans, Chch 8052
E: robnann@paradise.net.nz P: 355 4194