

OSNZ news

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4,
for the members of the Ornithological Society Of New Zealand (Inc.)

Please note that sightings recorded in this Newsletter are subject
to confirmation.

No. 37 December, 1985

Note: Deadline for the March issue will be
25th February.

Membership renewal

Subscriptions for 1986 are due on 1
January and to ensure receiving the March
Notornis and *OSNZ news* promptly, please
forward payments with invoice to the Hon.
Treasurer before 28 February.

D. F. BOOTH, *Hon. Treasurer*,
P.O. Box 35337, Browns Bay, Auckland.

Praise for OSNZ

Earlier this year Mrs Beth Brown, OSNZ
President, wrote to the Minister of Internal
Affairs on behalf of the Society to thank the
Wildlife Service for its sustained efforts to
salvage the remnants of New Zealand's
threatened endemic species of birds, and to
congratulate the Wildlife Service on its
successes.

In reply Mr Ralph Adams, Director of
the Wildlife Service, wrote ... 'I would like
to acknowledge the very important
contribution made by your Society which
simplifies the execution of our task. Your
members' work in the collection of basic
information such as bird numbers and
habitat use on estuaries etc is very valuable
background for conservation and manage-
ment, which would not otherwise be
available to "professionals" without a major
diversion of resources. Individual society
members also make an important contribu-
tion to the Wildlife Service's work by
assisting as knowledgeable volunteers on our
expeditions.

I value the assistance that your Society
provides'.

Falla Memorial Award

Nominations for the above award should
be sent to the Hon. Secretary, OSNZ. c/-
Post Office, Pauatahanui, Wellington, by 30
April 1986. Nominations must be signed by
at least two financial members of OSNZ and
should state clearly the claims of the nominee
on a national scale, together with a brief
ornithological vitae.

The basic requirements of the award are
detailed in *OSNZ news* 19. R. S. SLACK,
Hon. Secretary.

New OSNZ car stickers

A new OSNZ car sticker, designed by TV
graphics designer Stephen Ellis, has been
printed and is available from your RR.

These stickers need not be confined to
your car but can go into books, on boats,
binocular & telescope cases, packs, hats,
toothbrushes etc. The price is only \$1.00,
of which 0.50 cents will assist the funds of
your region. They are tremendous value and
last for ages — one of mine outlasted my
car.

PAUL SAGAR

Operation Wildlife

In October we published the first issue
of our quarterly magazine. This contained
news and articles of interest to conservation-
ists and naturalists, ranging from general to
more specific scientific information.

I invite you to make use of our magazine
by supplying regular news of your activities
or articles by members. We also require
manuscripts for publication in our *Sula*
Monograph series on any subject within the
natural history field.

Articles should be sent to D.H. Reed,
c/o The Old Vicarage, Great Barford,
Bedford MK44 3JJ, England.

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the following four Council
members retire in May 1986 and nominations are hereby called for, to fill
the vacancies created:

Mrs. B. Brown (President)
Mr. B. D. Bell
Dr. P. C. Bull
Mr. P. M. Sagar

Nominations close with the Secretary on 28th February 1986, and
must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person
nominated, who must also be a financial member of the Society. Please also
submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee.
Retiring Officers are eligible for re-election.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1986 Annual General
Meeting must reach the Secretary before 28 February 1986 in writing
and be signed by the mover and seconder.

The 1986 OSNZ Annual Conference & A.G.M. will be held in
Wellington on Saturday, 24th May.

R. S. SLACK,
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

c/o Post Office,
Pauatahanui,
Wellington

Labour Weekend in Hawkes Bay

The planned dotterel count in Hawkes Bay over Labour Weekend (25-28 October) was shaping up to be successful until cold southerly weather set in. This caused the cancellation of the first day's counts, with the exception of four stretches on the Waipawa River and two on the upper Tuki Tuki.

The following day (Sunday) was much colder with the addition of snow on the nearby ranges and hills and so once again the count was cancelled, except for a stretch in the middle Tuki Tuki. An attempt was made to count an area of the Ngaruroro River but rising water levels prevented the two members crossing the river to obtain a full count.

An evening visit to Lake Oingo to hear Bitterns booming was cancelled but a trip to Lake Tutira on Sunday was enjoyed by 12 members. Five Royal Spoonbills were an attraction at Westshore, and Black-fronted Dotterels and Banded Dotterels were seen at close range at nearby Tutakuri River.

The evenings were taken up with three talks. Lawrence Beras spoke about and showed excellent slides of his work with Harriers. Rob Wheeldon gave an insight into the survival of N.Z. Falcons, and expressed an earnest desire for support from fellow OSNZers in conducting a survey of N.Z. Falcons. He brought along his trained falcon 'Gemma' and flew her, to the delight of members. Ray Pierce gave an account of his

journey into the Himalayas, in search of Ibisbills. This talk was accompanied by a fine set of slides, including several of Ibisbills.

In rounding off the weekend, Rob Wheeldon showed members his falcon house, where he houses two pairs of falcon and hopes to establish a successful breeding programme. Here he again showed us the skills of 'Gemma', exercising her in the wide open spaces.

When the weather permitted, Ray Pierce was able to colour-band Banded Dotterels and gave local members a demonstration of the procedure. He completed a count of two stretches of the lower Tuki Tuki, and a Sanderling was a rare discovery.

Members attending the weekend were: H. Andrews, D. Baker, B. Binning, M. Bishop, F. H. Boyce, A. K. & M. M. Brown, B. Brown, M. T. Craven, R. A. & S. Creswell, G. Eller, C. J. Exley, A. R. Giblin, A. Goodwin, M. & S. Graham, J. G. Hamilton, B. & R. Heather, A. L. Hodgson, N. P. Langham, L. R. Lewis, A. A. Loman, K. & P. Mayhill, R. Mayhill, N. B. MacKenzie, C. F. McRae, F. & S. Nieuwland, R. Parrish, J. Philpott, R. Pierce, A. R. Plant, H. A. Robertson, N. Rothwell, A. C. Saxby, B. Seddon, R. & M. Skinner, R. Slack, H. Selderbeek, T. Smith, M. & J. Stoneham, K. V. Todd, M. & W. Twyde, C. Wetzel, R. Wheeldon.

KATHLEEN TODD

Banding Mail Bag

Since our contribution for the September OSNZ news we have received three more recoveries of overseas bands. One was a French band, found on a Black-browed Mollymawk from Whangamata Harbour Beach on 27 October. The second was a Polish band (the second within a few months) found on a Giant Petrel caught by two fishermen off the Kaikoura coast on 30 October. This bird was released alive and healthy, and with the band still on. The third foreign recovery was an East German band found on a dead Giant Petrel picked up on the coast near Oakura on 15 September.

We have requested the banding details for these birds and will pass on the information to you in due course.

We received the following information from the French. BS-5475, Wandering Albatross, banded on 22 October 1984 as a chick, at the Kerguelen Archipelago (49° 20'S; 70° 10'E). This bird was found dead at Eastbourne, Wellington, during a storm.

Another interesting recovery reported recently is: M-14295, Australasian Gannet, originally banded on 22 January 1955 as a pullus at the Plateau A colony, Cape Kidnappers. This bird was found dead on the beach at Tangalooma, Moreton Island (35 km east of Brisbane) on 29 September 1985. During its lifetime the bird was rebanded three times while breeding at the Cape Kidnappers colony.

RODERICK O. COSSEE

Band and Tag

Gamebird recoveries resulting from the latest hunting season started to decline recently and most reports now are for Canada Geese, for which there is an extended season. This gave our staff some extra time and we made the first attacks on the backlog of operator recoveries.

The computer system is now updated to 18 September, with the exception, of course, of operator recoveries.

New permits were issued for Mottled Petrel on an island in Lake Hauroko (Southland); Hutton's Shearwater in the Seaward Kaikoura Range; Banded Dotterel (whole country); Snares Cape Pigeon on the Snares Islands.

Following discussions with banding operators, and based on measurements taken over the past two years, we have ordered 5,000 bands of 2mm diameter. These bands will be more suitable for use on Rifleman, Grey Warbler and other small passerines than the current 2.5mm diameter A-sized bands. The bands will be made of aluminium and will be prefixed AA. We expect delivery about the end of February. In the meantime we would like to receive recommendations from banders (preferably with leg measurements) on other species for which these bands may be more suitable.

RODERICK O. COSSEE

Birds counted on three Hawkes Bay rivers, 25-28 October

Species	Waipawa	Tuki Tuki (part only)	Ngaruroro (part only)
Black Shag	3	nesting colony — 6 nests	—
Little Shag	—	3	—
White-faced Heron	1	5	3
Paradise Shelduck	16	24	34
Mallard	12	26	—
Grey Duck	—	—	nest with 10 eggs
Grey Teal	—	2	—
Black-backed Gull	29	73	c300 plus 100 nests
Black-billed Gull	5	—	—
White-fronted Tern	—	2	—
Spur-winged Plover	23	43	2
Banded Dotterel	321	148	20
Black-fronted Dotterel	60	44+	6
Pied Stilt	170+	186	8
Bar-tailed Godwit	—	1	—
Sanderling	—	1	—
Kingfisher	—	2	1
Harrier	7	8	1
Welcome Swallow	200+	c61	—

Kakas at Leigh

There is a report in **OSNZ news 35** of a dead Kaka being picked up by a beach patrol at Pakiri. The comment was that perhaps it was from Little Barrier Island.

It is more likely that it came from Leigh. There has been a resident population of Kakas, now estimated at about 10 birds, for about 10 years. Normally they roost in trees round Leigh Harbour, taking off inland in the morning and coming back at night. I frequently see or hear them flying over Goat Island Road in the evening, coming from the general direction of Pakiri and heading towards Leigh.

F. J. TAYLOR

A resourceful Blackbird

At our Wanaka crib one of the problems of winter is blockage of the spouting by leaves from a large Chinese poplar. On 21/9/85 a female Blackbird was busily removing leaves from a neighbour's guttering. She discarded the dry leaves over the side, then collected a beakful of wet, decaying pieces for a nest she was obviously constructing in a Douglas fir about 20 m away. We watched her make several of these sorties. Meanwhile, His Lordship helped himself to a wormy breakfast from the lawn, and periodically supervised operations from an outer twig of the fir.

PETER & MARGARET CHILD

Smaller birds using Lake Taupo beaches

Birds commonly seen along the Lake Taupo shore near Hatepe (on the eastern side of the lake) include Little Shag, Black-backed Gull, Pied Stilt, and White-faced Heron. In addition, numbers of smaller birds are constant users of the beaches and this indicates that they are an important source of food — seeds, other plant remains, tiny crustaceans, insects, and crumbs and larger fragments from lakeside picnics. The lake must also be a source of drinking water, especially during calm weather.

Starlings and Chaffinches are probably the commonest species and parties of these are often seen as they search for food in the sand and fine gravel along the water's edge. Small numbers of Yellowhammers, Greenfinches and Redpolls tend to feed in the grasses and low scrub immediately adjacent to the beaches, though they are seen occasionally along the shore.

Among the birds seen recently was a family (9-10) of very young Californian Quail. These were observed in completely calm weather as they ran about on firm sand close to the lake edge before following an adult bird back into nearby low scrub.

Of the indigenous birds, one or two Pipits are present occasionally but they move away

from the area when the lake is at or near its maximum level. During calm weather they search for food at the lake edge, for example along the wracks of weed washed ashore. When the lake is low I have also seen them wading in very shallow pools as they seek food under partially submerged cobbles.

Silvereyes are also common along the shore, as elsewhere around the Hatepe settlement, but they appear to avoid the actual beaches.

W. A. WATTERS

Grey-faced Petrels on mainland

On two occasions this year, in June and August, I have seen Grey-faced Petrels land and scramble to burrows at Waikawa Point, East Cape. The colony is small — perhaps 8 or 10 burrows — but the landowner has known of it for at least 20 years. Other mainland colonies are known from Mt. Maunganui and some other sites well inside the Bay of Plenty. Although this species breeds on islands south of East Cape, does anyone know of other extant mainland colonies east or south of the Bay of Plenty?

JOHN INNES

Radio tracking of the Chatham Island Taiko

After three years research, planning, assembling and testing the radio telemetric tracking system commenced operation in the Tuku Gully during early September. This is a vital phase in the latest attempt to locate the breeding ground of that enigmatic species, the Chatham Island Taiko.

The tracking system was erected during September and October by a team led by Alastair Gordon of Whangarei. This tracking system obtains bearings on a pulse signal from a miniature transmitter attached to the two central tail feathers of a Taiko. Hugh Best, who was responsible for the design of the radio telemetric tracking system, calibrated the equipment in the field during October and his on-going support is much appreciated. Mike Imber joined the expedition in early October and was able to attach three transmitters during the following fortnight, to commence this season's radio telemetric effort.

During the next three months the tracking system will be used to monitor the signals of Taiko as they fly inland. The radio telemetric tracking system consists of: 6 twin yagi directional aerials, 3 multi collinear omnidirectional aerials, 3 slim jim omnidirectional aerials, 5 handheld single yagi directional aerials, 2 ZL special super directional aerials.

Expedition members will be spending many nights listening to signals and tracking

Taiko from inside the wooden shelters at the base of pipe masts that support the telemetric arrays.

Bearings recorded from Taiko flying inland will be plotted on an enlarged contour map and on aerial photographs. By triangulation, these should indicate areas to be intensively searched for burrows.

Four Taiko have been captured and released so far this season. Three of these are new birds, bringing the total number of banded individuals to 27, whilst the fourth Taiko was E-127213, a recapture.

Currently a team under the leadership of Russell Thomas is carrying out an intensive monitoring programme. This programme will be continued in December and January by teams under my direction.

The results of the final phase of the expedition will be included in a later report.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, *Expedition Leader Taiko Research Project*

News from the RAOU New booklet

The Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union has just published a 63-page booklet entitled *Methods of censusing birds in Australia*. A very important chapter for NZ ornithologists covers 'Counting and banding waders in Australia and New Zealand'. Other chapters on land and water birds are very relevant.

To obtain this booklet you can pay in NZ currency. Send \$6.25 to B. J. Gill (Auckland Museum, Private Bag, Auckland) who is taking orders. If a receipt is needed please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The booklets will be sent direct from Melbourne in the New Year.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the RAOU are due on 1 January 1986. You can pay in NZ currency to the RAOU account in Auckland (c/o B.J. Gill). Rates for 1986 are NZ\$50 with *Emu* and NZ\$21 without *Emu*. The quarterly illustrated *Newsletter* is sent to all RAOU members. Enclosed SAE if receipt required.

B. J. GILL

Native Pigeon at sea

In mid-August two of our Park Assistants were at sea off Tonga Quay, Nelson when one of them noticed a Native Pigeon in the water. Thinking it to be injured they pulled alongside and attempted to pick it up, whereupon it flew off strongly. However, a NZ Falcon suddenly appeared and the pigeon only escaped from it by sheltering in a rocky cleft on a nearby island.

GEOFF RENNISON

Hedge Sparrow or not?

As OSNZ Secretary, I received an enquiry as to whether the common name of *Prunella modularis* should be spelled Hedge Sparrow or Hedgesparrow. The former spelling is used in the Checklist (p. 66) but the latter is used in the Amendments (p. 21). To resolve the matter I sought advice from Mr E. G. Turbott, convenor of the Checklist Committee. An extract from his reply is as follows.

“Hedge Sparrow versus Hedgesparrow”.

My idea for the new Checklist is to change back to two separate words, Hedge Sparrow, as was certainly our New Zealand custom up to the time of the Checklist Amendments. In the latter Hedgesparrow was decided upon mainly, so far as I know, to stress the point (as frequently made in debate in Britain) that as the bird is *not* a sparrow proper we should say ‘Sparrow, House’, ‘Sparrow, Tree’, etc., but Hedgesparrow for the non-sparrow! (See Fowler for the etymology of hyphenation). A. L. Thomson (*A New Dictionary of Birds*, 1964) says, under Accentor: “The only member to have a traditional English name is the Hedgesparrow (or Dunnock) *Prunella modularis* The old vernacular name Dunnock is increasingly preferred by ornithologists to the more generally used misnomer.” However, the use of Hedge Sparrow does not seem to have caused all that much difficulty in New Zealand — in fact the opportunity is often taken when its position is noted in classifications, lists, etc. to point out the misnomer!

As mentioned above, Hedge Sparrow is firmly entrenched in New Zealand literature, while about half of the popular British bird books use Hedge Sparrow — this seems the sensible version to me. *The Readers Digest Complete Book of New Zealand Birds* (presumably following the Amendments) uses Hedgesparrow.

As Dick Sibson said when we were discussing this: ‘When in doubt go to Shakespeare’. Standard texts use Hedge-sparrow.

“The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,

That it had it head bit off by it young”

King Lear I, iv.

The Oxford Dictionary choice is hedge-sparrow (a stage in the etymology of the traditional hedge sparrow?) — as always, see Fowler!”

Any further contributions?

ROY SLACK, *Hon. Secretary*

(B. Campbell & E. Lack, *A Dictionary of Birds*, 1985, have this to say “Hedge Sparrow: name (misnomer), alternatively ‘Dunnock’, of *Prunella modularis*”. Ed.)

* * * *

Chatham Island Black Robin update

Since its inception in 1980, and particularly during the past two seasons, the Black Robin conservation programme has brought spectacular results. Five birds, including only one effective breeding pair, existed in 1980 whereas the population now exceeds 30 birds. This increase can be attributed largely, if not entirely, to the N.Z. Wildlife Service’s innovative management programme which involved:

(i) Development and refinement of techniques for safely and effectively manipulating the robin’s nesting cycles, including fostering eggs and young to other species. This intervention increased egg production, and thus breeding potential, by over 100%;

(ii) Protecting and securing both robin and tit (foster) nests, which has virtually eliminated accidental losses (due largely to petrels crashing into nests at night) during incubation and nestling periods;

(iii) Relocation and establishment of the major robin population on South East Island, which vastly increased the area of habitat available to the Black Robin, so that for the first time this century the species has sufficient space to increase its population and expand its range. (Little Mangere, where the species was confined for almost a century, and Mangere, to which the depleted population of 7 birds was transferred in 1976/77, each have about 5-ha. of habitat. This compares with the 100 ha. available on South East Island). Survival, particularly of juveniles and unattached birds, has improved markedly since their release on South East Island;

(iv) The improved survival rate of young birds has given rise to a younger and very much more productive and successful breeding population.

During the 1984/85 breeding season the 5 pairs of robins produced a record 19 fledglings, all of which reached independence. This gave a total of 38 robins — more than has existed at any other time this century. (Nevertheless, the Black Robin is probably still our rarest breeding species.) At least 31 of these, 7 on Mangere and 24 on South East Island, were alive in June 1985 when they were last checked by Wildlife Service staff. These birds comprised 14 females (5 of them raised by tomtits) and 17 males (7 raised by tomtits). However, since the June survey an unusually fierce storm has lashed the Chathams and caused considerable damage to remnant forests throughout the islands. As yet it is not known how this affected the Black Robins. We visit the islands next in early October.

Not all the Black Robins which survived the winter will breed during the 1985/86 season because robins generally do not breed in their first year. However, with luck, we can expect 9 or 10 pairs to breed — that

is about twice as many as during the previous year. All going well, this will be the last occasion that the robins receive any direct help in their breeding efforts for then they should be well able to continue unaided their historic recovery from the brink of extinction.

DON MERTON

Albino birds

Further to various sightings of an albino bar-tailed godwit and a white-headed Wrybill in the Firth of Thames. A pure white Fantail was seen at Glenbrook in April and mid-June and, bigger and better, a nearly-white White-faced Heron at the Gordon’s Road shellbank, Awhitu Peninsula, on 11/8/85. The latter oddity, seen by Babara Burch and Josie Driessen, was all white but for normal bill and legs, and five dark primaries with some dark wing coverts. I now await the first report of a white Black Swan for South Auckland!

BETH BROWN

What’s in a name?

1. Match the names. Only one combination of answers is possible, even though some ‘surnames’ match two or more ‘generic’ names, and vice versa. For example, there is an African parrot called Lilian’s Lovebird! Answers will be given in the next issue.

Abbot’s	Antwren
Audubon’s	Booby
Buller’s	Bush-shrike
Cook’s	Cockatoo
Costa’s	Courseur
Darwin’s	Eagle
Donaldson-Smith’s	Falcon
Eleanora’s	Flamingo
Franklin’s	Frogmouth
Gould’s	Fruit Dove
Humboldt	Goose
Ihering’s	Gull
Jame’s	Honeyguide
Kitlitz’s	Hummingbird
Lilian’s	Laughing Thrush
Livingstone’s	Lovebird
Major Mitchell’s	Murrelet
Moreau’s	Nightjar
Newton’s	Oriole
Olag’s	Parakeet
Perrin’s	Penguin
Queen Victoria’s	Petrel
Ross’	Plover
Speke’s	Rhea
Temminck’s	Riflebird
Upcher’s	Shearwater
Verreaux’s	Sunbird
Wallace’s	Turaco
Xantu’s	Tyrannulet
Yersin’s	Warbler
Zenker’s	Weaver

Note the historical-geographical clues!

HUGH ROBERTSON & PAUL JAMES

Wreck of prions in September

We were out on the Northland West Coast on 7 September at the start of a major wreck of prions. Several live prions were found on the beach, along with many freshly dead birds. Our tally for the day was 400 seabirds of 10 species for 10.5 km of beach patrolled.

The following weekend the corpses of prions and other seabirds on the beaches had dried out somewhat but most were complete. A patrol of 53 km resulted in a tally of 3,911 seabirds of 21 species.

A fortnight after the start of the wreck

the prions had deteriorated greatly and a far greater proportion were identifiable only as 'prion species'. On 15.2 km of beach 657 seabirds of 17 species were recorded.

When the number of prions that were identified to species is compared with the number recorded as 'prion species', it is obvious that the best time to complete beach patrolling is about a week after the start of a wreck.

After more than a week the prions have deteriorated to such an extent that more than one in five is unidentifiable.

PAT & KAREN MILLER

BRITAIN

Wader Study Group Bulletin: Study methods, interim reports from many countries, migration, trapping, publications. Regular N. American section.

British Birds: West Palearctic coverage; many photos & drawings; identification problems, esp. of waders; book reviews.

Ibis: Scientific studies, often of great general interest.

Ringing and Migration: British Trust for Ornithology.

Birds: Royal Soc. for the Protection of Birds (Britain).

Scottish Birds: Activities and studies in Scotland.

Wildfowl: 1 large issue; papers on wildfowl research in many countries.

AMERICA

Western Birds: Covers all Pacific states, Alaska to Hawaii and Mexico; readable and useful.

American Museum Novitates: Irregular; contain special studies, often very important.

The Condor: Wide variety, not just American; fairly elaborate content.

Journal for Field Ornithology: Banding.

Florida State Museum Bulletin.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Cormorant: Essential on S. Hemisphere seabirds.

The Ostrich: Papers on many groups, well presented; esp. waders.

JAPAN

Toir; In Japanese; English summaries.

Miscellaneous Reports: Yamashina Inst. for Ornithology: In Japanese; contents, titles, tables, figures, and lengthy summaries in English.

EUROPE

Le Gerfaut (Belgium): Papers in English, French, Dutch; often very useful.

Ardea (Holland).

Alauda (France).

L'Oiseau et la Revue Francaise (France).

Journal fur Ornithologie (Germany).

Ornithologische Mitteilungen (Germany).

Die Vogelwelt (Germany).

Die Vogelwarte (Germany).

Anzieger der Orn. Gesellschaft in Bayern (Germany).

Der Ornithologische Beobachter (Switzerland).

Auspicium (Germany): Ringing report.

Laurus (Yugoslavia).

Ardeola (Spain).

Ornis Fennica (Finland).

Finnish Game Research.

Var Fagelvarld (Sweden).

Aquila (Hungary).

Acta Ornithologica (Poland).

Notatki Ornitologiczna (Poland).

The Ring (Poland): in English.

Most of these journals have English summaries; some have English papers; but in general they are in their national language with English, French or German summaries.

Date	No. prions identified to species	No. prions not identifiable	Identified prions: prion species
7/9	376	8	47:1
14/9	3480	55	63:1
21/9	435	115	4:1

A special OSNZ service to members — do you use it?

If you are really interested in birds, you surely want to know about the ornithology of parts of the world other than New Zealand.

OSNZ library receives many journals, most by exchange with *Notornis* and a few by subscription. This library is housed at Auckland Museum, and many members borrow them there or can see them regularly if they work at a museum, university or government department whose library gets some of these journals.

What about the rest of us, who are shut out from seeing overseas journals and newsletters?

Since 1980, the OSNZ librarian, Anthea Goodwin, has run a scheme by which you can receive the new issues of the journals you want, on circulation with other members. At present, only 29 members are using the scheme; there is room for plenty more. Here's what you do:

1. Study the following list of what we get, and decide which you want to receive.
2. If necessary, ask Anthea for one or two issues of journals you are wondering about so that you can make up your mind.
3. Send your list of wants to the *Hon. Librarian, A. J. Goodwin, R.D. 1, Clevedon*, together with \$1.00 for each journal or newsletter title.

The \$1.00 covers the cost of posting the issues out and forms a fund to replace lost issues (only one lost so far in five years). It is not an annual charge and is renewed only when the funds run out in, perhaps, 4-5 years.

So, you can read regularly about bird study in, say, Australia, Papua New Guinea, USA, Britain, southern Africa, or Europe without paying enormous subscriptions. You can also compare OSNZ activities with those of other societies and appreciate what good value for money *Notornis* and *OSNZ news* are. Your only responsibilities are to pass each issue on promptly and to post it in a good-quality envelope.

BARRIE HEATHER

AUSTRALASIA

The Emu (Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union).

Corella (Aust. Bird Study Association).

Australian Birds (Australasian Ornithologists' Club).

The Stilt (Australasian Wader Study Group).

Australasian Seabird Group newsletter.

Naika (Vanuatu Nat. Sciences Soc.).

South Australian Ornithologist (SA Orn. Assoc.).

The Australian Bird Watcher (Bird Observers Club, Victoria).

The Sun Bird (Queensland Orn. Soc.).

Papua New Guinea Newsletter (PNG Bird Soc.).

The Tasmanian Naturalist (Tas. Field Nat. Club).

All these have much general interest; Tas. one covers general nat. hist.

NEWSLETTERS & MAGAZINES

IUCN Bulletin (International Union for Conservation of Nature, Switzerland): Newsletter style; in English.

Bokmakierie (S. Africa); General ornithological articles in popular style.

Elepaio (Hawaiian Audubon Soc.): Newsletter style.

Country-side: Natural history articles (British) in popular style.

BTO News: A fairly formal newsletter of British Trust studies.

The Bird Observer (Victoria): Straight newsletter.

The Living Bird: Quarterly magazine (North America).

NSW Field Ornith. News.

RAOU News: Aust. equivalent of OSNZ News.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

(1) Birds in mangroves

I am preparing an account of the New Zealand mangrove association and would like to appeal to OSNZ members for any observations that they might have on the uses made by birds of mangrove areas.

None of our birds, in contrast to tropical regions, is confined to mangrove areas, but numerous birds make use of them. In New Zealand the uses can be divided broadly into three categories: (1) waders which feed on the mud amongst mangroves (e.g. White-faced Heron and Banded Rail — the latter also nests there); (2) land birds which feed on insects etc in the foliage and may sometimes nest there (e.g. Silvereyes and Fantails); (3) land birds which use the mangroves for perching (e.g. Blackbirds and Tuis).

I am not seeking casual records of occurrences, but rather biological observations such as feeding, roosting and nesting. I feel sure that members, especially those living in the north, could provide a much wider coverage of areas than I can on limited field trips.

Please send your observations to me at: Marine Research Laboratory, R.D. 1, Leigh. Needless to say, observations on other animals would be useful — rats will nest in hollow trunks of mangroves, and opossum tracks have been seen in the swamps, but no firm evidence of opossum browsing. (Incidentally, a koala was photographed wandering amongst the mangroves in Australia.)

F. J. TAYLOR

(2) Colour-banded Banded Dotterels

During the 1985 breeding season OSNZ members from Southland to Rotorua banded several hundred Banded Dotterels as part of a migration study. Most of these birds will each be wearing a metal band and 1-3 colour bands on their lower legs. Each combination of colours designates a particular region and age and sex classes.

If you see any of these birds please record details of colour-combination (including position of metal, e.g. left leg red over yellow; right leg metal over white), locality, date, no. of birds checked for bands (I'm interested in nil returns too). When observing the bands, it always pays to double check, preferably with a telescope, or have someone else confirm the combination — common errors include confusing left and right legs, and confusing blue and green bands. If there is any doubt about an observation, please indicate this when you write.

Details can be conveyed to your RR or direct to me. Banded Dotterel Study Group, c/o Ray Pierce, P.O. Box 69, Lake Tekapo.

RAY PIERCE

(3) Stilts

Colour-banded Black Stilts have a habit of keeping a low profile for months or even years. Recently, two birds were re-sighted after an intervening period of two and a half years — one of these birds was seen at Hawera, Taranaki and the other in the upper Rangitata Valley, Canterbury. We lose track of many other banded Black Stilts too, particularly 1-2 year olds which may still have mottled sub-adult plumage.

You can help the Black Stilt Project by keeping a check on likely spots, e.g. riverbeds, lagoons, estuaries anywhere in the country. If you find a colour-banded Black Stilt, please note details of the band combination (including whether the bands were on the upper or lower leg), locality, date, description of bird, and note other birds it was associating with. Send details to Dave Murray, Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 800, Timaru.

Plumages of hybrid stilts are being monitored throughout NZ. The aim is to establish patterns of seasonal and long-term changes in hybrid numbers in different parts of the country, e.g. in which regions do hybrids breed, and where do they winter? Are hybrids being kept in the 'Pied Stilt population' or are they being diluted by pied genes?

The simplest way of answering these questions is to score the plumages of adult stilts during the June and November national wader counts, but more frequent observations would be better. If you can help, please contact me on your RR. Each RR will have copies of an identification guide to NZ stilts, which gives details of how to score plumages, and also illustrates the immature plumages of Black Stilts. Details should be sent to Ray Pierce, P.O. Box 69, Lake Tekapo.

RAY PIERCE

Shags and Royal Spoonbills nesting on Maukiekie Island, Moeraki, Otago

I have been studying the birdlife on this small island since 1977. It is the only offshore island between Otago Peninsula and Banks Peninsula, and can boast two unique points of interest.

1. The combination of breeding species of shags — it is the only location in Australasia, and probably the world, where tree-nesters, slope-nesters, and cliff-nesters breed together. The respective species here are Little Shags (10-20 nests), Stewart Island Shags (800+ nests), and Spotted Shags (20-60 nests).
2. The breeding habitat of Royal Spoonbills — although this species is spread through Eurasia, northern Africa and Australasia, this is the only known breeding site on an offshore island.

A paper for *Notornis* is in preparation but

as the unique features of the island become better known I wish to emphasise that Maukiekie and practically all of the adjacent coastline is in private ownership being Maori Land to low tide. *Any trespassing will jeopardise future research in this area.*

If you wish to observe the birdlife on the island there are two observation points open to the public — the garbage dump (delightful surroundings) and the beach adjacent to the Kaik. *Do not stray from these two sites and do not attempt to land on the island.*

The following notes may be of interest to those wishing to observe the island.

1. It is the only site in New Zealand where the public may observe spoonbills or Stewart Island Shags from land at relatively close range.
2. It is the northernmost colony of Stewart Island Shags, with nesting first occurring about 1960. Now it is the largest colony and is still growing.
3. Royal Spoonbills first nested there in 1983/84, re-nested in 1984/85, and returned in mid-September 1985 presumably to breed again. In both breeding seasons there were seven nests and about 10 chicks fledged.

I am attempting to accurately define the daily foraging range of spoonbills during the breeding season and any observations from members would be appreciated. Please send details of observations or any inquiries to Chris Lalas, Portobello Marine Laboratory, P.O. 8, Portobello, Dunedin.

CHRIS LALAS

Regional Roundup

Far North: Activities have concentrated on the National Wader Count and beach patrolling. Highlights of the former were 16 Royal Spoonbills and 27 Asiatic Whimbrels at Walker Island. In spite of three trips to Kowhai Beach no arctic migrants were recorded.

During July, the 90 Mile Beach patrol netted 15 Giant Petrels, including one with a Polish band. The July patrol of 335 seabirds was the fifth month of relatively high recoveries and almost 2,400 have been recorded in the first half of 1985. Because of continuous north east winds significant erosion has occurred on the eastern beaches, resulting in few recoveries (Laurie Howell).

Auckland: The past three monthly meetings have featured Kenya by Adrian Riegan, Newfoundland by Marshall Laird, and Cape Horn by Anthea Goodwin. Anthea showed slides from her voyage on *Totorore*, including the expedition to South Georgia, all of which has been quite breath-taking.

For local excitements the region had its share of the large wreck of prions in September, which totalled 850 on Muriwai, to be followed by 300 birds of 16 species in October, and 234 of 21 species on 10/11 when a Royal Albatross was the most striking find.

The Caspian Tern colony at the Mangawhai Wildlife Refuge contained 120 nests on 19/10 and efforts are being made to watch over and protect the birds until fledging. Two pairs of Fairy Terns and an unusual sighting of 2 Royal Spoonbills also marked the visit.

At Mangere, the pools were the phalarope turned up in June produced another surprise in the form of a snipe, presumably the Japanese species. This bird was seen on four occasions, and on a later visit a Pectoral and 24 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were located.

A survey of the Mahurangi West Regional Reserve on 12/10 yielded 40 species, including Shining Cuckoo, Kookaburra, and Spotless Crake. Besides our efforts at observing and recording, a number of members have also assisted the work of the Bird Rescue Group. Currently the focus is on young Starlings which left their nests too soon, but the group has also tended an Antarctic Fulmar and a variety of other seabirds in recent months. As usual there is much to report: last but not least, a pair of Blackbirds are incubating 4 eggs in the hedge of the RRs garden and providing an opportunity to try out the new version of the Society's nest record card. (Michael Taylor.)

South Auckland: Returning migrant waders were of special interest at Access Bay Spit, Firth of Thames in September. On 21/9 newly arrived godwits and Knots kept separate from those which had overwintered. While the latter fed on the falling tide, two flocks of recent arrivals slept on. Next day, many more had arrived and the pattern was repeated.

It was surprising to see 24 or more Whimbrels, for these usually keep well hidden at Piako. Small flocks of Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, a Terek Sandpiper and Red-necked Stints were approached closely and did not move. A few Turnstones had arrived, and 3 Far Eastern Curlews. The Ringed Plover was still present on 6/11.

The Cattle Egret flock of 80 birds was still at Piako at the end of October. A Black-browed Mollymawk bearing a French band was found at Whangamata on 27/10, this is being followed up. (Beth Brown.)

Waikato: 35 OSNZ members from as far away as Auckland and Taranaki had an outstandingly successful weekend studying seabirds at the Te Kauri Lodge, under the able guidance of Mike Imber.

Mike managed to deal in detail with virtually every seabird we are likely to encounter on our beaches, giving us a wealth of detail on distribution, feeding and breeding habits, seasonal movements, as well as the fine points of identification. His talks were interspersed with workshops where we learnt how to measure and record the relevant parts of the avian body, and how to look for the significant details.

Other speakers were David Medway, who told us about his research into the

ornithological aspects of Cook's 3 voyages; and Anthea Goodwin, who gave an illustrated talk about her part in the *Totorore* expedition. The programme concluded with a 'quiz' show, organised by Myk Davis from Hawera, which tested the newly acquired skills of us all and could thus be termed the culmination of the whole weekend. Our grateful thanks to the organiser, Stella Rowe and her helpers, and a special vote of thanks to Findlay's Bakeries (=Roger Mayhill), who donated our daily bread. (Folkert Nieuwland.)

Bay of Plenty: We had a very well attended field trip to Lake Oniwhenua on 11/8, with 10 local members, 3 friends and John Innes participating. Highlights were very good views of Marsh Crakes, and less good ones of Spotless Crakes and 2 Dabchicks courting. The trip was beautifully finished with a masterful display of trout fishing from John Innes!

Our 3-day trip exploring our less well known East Coast (Motu river to East Cape) was very poorly attended but nonetheless successful. We found a pair of NZ Dotterels breeding at both the Motu Rivermouth and Whangaparoa Beach, and a pair without a nest at Hick's Bay. A tattler was seen at Te Araroa, and a possible immature White-winged Black Tern at the Motu Rivermouth. Godwits were found at a number of odd places e.g. Whangaparoa Rivermouth. (Paddy Latham.)

Taranaki: An almost pure white Giant Petrel was found dead on the coast near New Plymouth on 15/9. It bore an East German band and details are eagerly awaited.

On 3/11 several members visited the mouth of the Waitotara River. The most significant record was that of a solitary Pectoral Sandpiper feeding along the edge of a marshy coastal lagoon. In addition, there were 16 Bar-tailed Godwits, 4 Knots and 2 Variable Oystercatchers. The coastal Black-backed Gull colony contained 126 nests of which 77 had no eggs; 20 had 1 egg; 7 had 2 eggs; and 12 had 3 eggs. This indicated that egg-laying had not yet reached its peak.

In June a Kaka appeared in New Plymouth. It was joined by a second in July and a third in August. While single Kaka have occasionally visited the city briefly over the years, this is the first time that more than one, let alone 3 have done so. All 3 were frequently seen together, one of their favoured haunts being Pukekura Park where they were seen to feed on the nectar of flowering kowhai and rewarewa among other things.

A Shining Cuckoo was first heard in New Plymouth this season on 29/9. (David Medway.)

Manawatu/Horowhenua/Wanganui: There were plenty of arctic waders in October. On 29/10 M. & M. Olsen reported the following from the north side: 325 Bar-tailed Godwits, 73 Knots, 34 Golden Plovers, 1 Far Eastern Curlew, 1 Wrybill, 6 Variable

Oystercatchers, 32 Pied Stilts, 1 Little Tern and 3 Caspian Terns.

October also produced one of our biggest beach patrol hauls in recent years. On 20/10 9 members patrolled beaches in the Manawatu/Rangitikei area and over 60 birds were collected from 25 km of beach. These included 10 Antarctic Fulmars, 2 White-headed Petrels, 1 Shy Mollymawk, and 2 Blue Petrels. (Lindsay Davies.)

Canterbury: A mapping scheme based on 1 km grid squares covering the Christchurch metropolitan area was started on 1 October. The scheme will cover the breeding season (October-January inclusive) and winter (May-July), with the aims of mapping in detail the distribution of breeding birds and examining seasonal changes in distribution.

Unfortunately the Asiatic Dowitcher did not stay around long enough for the editor to see it, but Asiatic Black-tailed Godwits were still present at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary in mid-November. (Paul Sagar.)

Otago: The 15 members who attended the August meeting were treated to a relaxed and informative talk by Dr Chris Lalas on the coastal birds of Otago. Chris underlined the importance of some seemingly small, insignificant islands, such as Green and Wharekakahu, as important breeding grounds for Yellow-eyed Penguins, Little Blue Penguins, Little Shags, Stewart Island Shags, Spotted Shags and Fairy Prions. The Nuggets and Otago Peninsula, of course, were not ignored and the talk ended on a high note with discussion of the Royal Spoonbill colony near Moeraki. (Tony Robinson.)

Over 40 lists had been compiled for the Dunedin Mapping Scheme by the end of September. This wasn't a bad start to the scheme but there is still a lot of work ahead of us.

Tony & Anne Hocken saw 2 Far Eastern Curlews and 4 Knots at Papanui Inlet on 22/9. These are rather unusual sightings for Dunedin. (Peter Schweigman.)

RAOU Wader Studies Group surveys

Next year the RAOU Wader Studies Group plans to survey waders in north west Australia and OSNZ members are invited to participate in what should be some exciting birdwatching. The dates for the surveys are: 11-26 April, 15 August - 14 September, and 14-28 September. OSNZ members would have to get themselves to Perth for these trips.

Further details are available from Brett Lane, RAOU Wader Studies Group, 21 Gladstone Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria 3039, Australia.

HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR ATLAS YET/

The *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand* by P.C. Bull, P.D. Gaze & C.J.R. Robertson. 1985. 298 pp., plus many microfiches, presents information on bird distribution collected between September 1969 and December 1979 during a joint undertaking by OSNZ, Ecology Division

DSIR & the Wildlife Service.

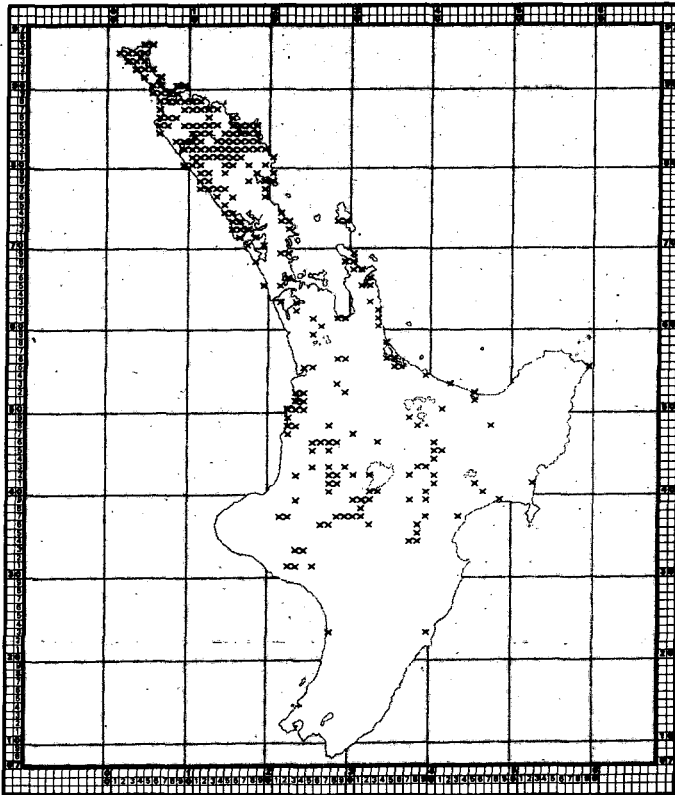
The maps in this atlas are based on just under 19,000 species lists compiled during the 10 years by over 800 observers. These lists cover 96% of the 3,675 squares that together cover the whole of mainland NZ and its offshore islands.

The atlas provides the most up-to-date and detailed account of bird distribution in NZ yet assembled in one volume, and the wealth

of information it contains will be a continuing source of reference.

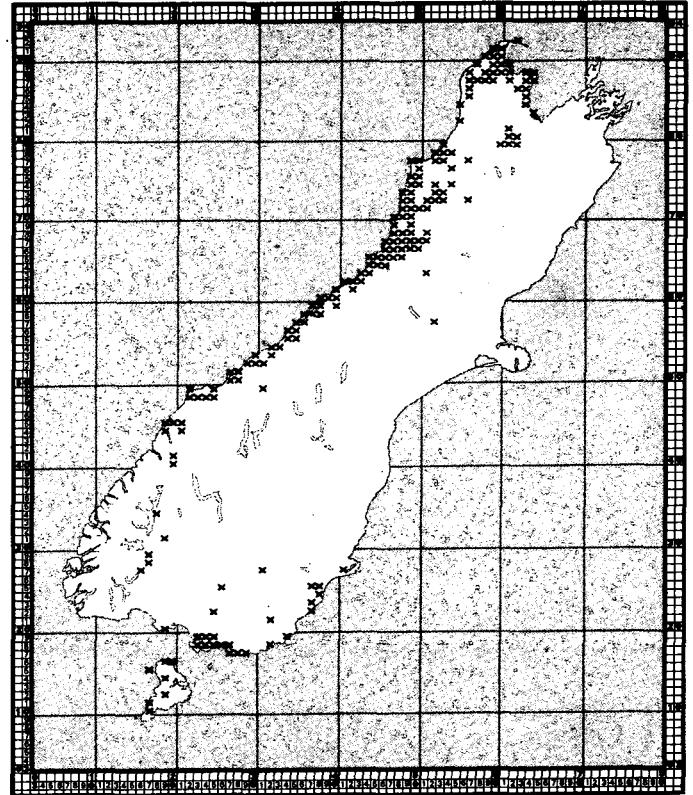
Publication of the atlas was financed from the Society's Projects Assistance Fund and all profits from sales return to this fund. The price is \$30.00, plus \$3.00 postage. Orders and payment should be sent to OSNZ, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington North.

* * * *



x = Fernbird (*Bowdleria punctata*)

Examples of the maps of species distribution in the atlas.



x = Fernbird (*Bowdleria punctata*)

The rather strict ecological requirements of the South Island and southern subspecies have been described by Best (1979) and Barlow (1983).

Important wetland given to conservation group

To commemorate the 1985 Conservation Week the 300 hectare (780 acres) Sinclair Wetlands, which have been owned by Mr H. A. Sinclair of Outram, Dunedin, for the past 25 years have been given to the Lower Hutt based conservation group Ducks Unlimited.

The Sinclair Wetlands lie between Lakes Waihola and Waipori, just south of Dunedin and were purchased by Mr Sinclair in 1960 for £2,000. Against considerable opposition Mr Sinclair has managed and maintained the wetlands for the benefit of nearly 70 bird species which inhabit the area, including; Fernbird, Bellbird, Tui, N.Z. Pigeon, Bittern, Banded Rail, Grey Duck, Grey Teal, Shoveler, Scaup, Black Swan, Mute Swan, and the occasional Brown Teal.

The wetlands consist of many large lagoons and large swamp areas, and only 20 hectares are on dry ground.

The Sinclair Wetlands have long been recognised as the best privately owned wetlands in New Zealand, and overseas authorities have determined that the wetlands rank in the best 20 privately owned wetlands in the world. To protect the wetlands, they were given reserve status in 1981 and to provide further protection Ducks Unlimited will also establish a QE II National Trust Open Space Covenant over the wetlands.

Ducks Unlimited, which is a national waterfowl and wetlands conservation organisation, is launching an appeal to raise funds for the long term management of the Sinclair Wetlands. Management will include the establishment of public education facilities, research facilities, walkways, hides,

captive waterfowl displays, fencing, planting, and habitat management. Mr Sinclair will reside on the property and will continue to manage the wetlands in exactly the same way as he has done for the past 25 years.

NEIL HAYES

Seagrove's senior citizen soldiers on

The grand old man N.Z. Dotterel 'Wimble' again reported present and correct on census day, 27/7/85. Banded on 26/12/50 by H. R. McKenzie and re-banded on 10/11/76 by Sylvia Reed, he appeared to be in good health when seen by Dick Veitch. It will be a matter of some interest to see whether 'Wimble' and his mate raise chicks this season.

BETH BROWN