

# 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.

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Note Deadline for the September issue  
will be 15th August.

## 20th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS 1990

### Preliminary Notice

The 20th International Ornithological Congress will take place in Christchurch from 2-9 December 1990. The President is Professor Charles G. Sibley (USA) and the Secretary-General is Dr Ben D. Bell (NZ). It is anticipated that the Congress programme will include plenary lectures, symposia, contributed papers (spoken and posters), workshops, discussion groups and films. There will be a mid-Congress excursion day. Longer excursions are planned to interesting ornithological sites in New Zealand and adjacent regions before and after the congress. Requests for the First Circular and suggestions regarding Congress organisation should be addressed to:

Dr Ben D. Bell,  
Secretary-General,  
20th International Ornithological Congress,  
Department of Zoology,  
Victoria University of Wellington,  
Private Bag, Wellington

### Annual Conference & AMG – Dunedin

The Annual Conference and AMG of the Society was held in Dunedin during the weekend of 22-24 May 1987. This was a 'live-in' conference and all activities associated with the weekend, with the exception of the field trip, were held in the comfortable setting of Knox College. An obvious advantage of this was that it allowed those attending (about 85 members) more time to talk with one another.

Council met on the Friday and dealt with a long and varied agenda. Most of the morning was spent working through the

various committee and Scheme annual reports, most of which appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Probably the most important decision of Council was the commitment to investigate urgently the feasibility of having a paid executive officer, probably based in Wellington. The main advantages to the Society of having a national office would be better publicity, better service to members, better administration of Society affairs, and a higher profile. At recent AGMs there has been a strong call for the Society to develop a higher public profile and gain more publicity. Council see the possible employment of a full-time staff as the best means of achieving these aims.

Regional Representatives met on Friday evening and Saturday morning and Dr Ben Bell and Chris Robertson took the opportunity to summarise the Society's successful bid to host the 20th International Ornithological Congress in NZ during 1990. Some of the planned activities of the Congress were outlined and suggestions made about how OSNZ members could be involved.

The sun shone brightly as 2 bus loads headed out to Otago Peninsula on Saturday. A much-appreciated innovation of this field trip was that it allowed RRs and Council members the opportunity to meet the main party for lunch at Hoopers Inlet and then give their binoculars an airing for the rest of the afternoon. After lunch we moved to Taiaroa Head and spent some time gazing out to sea, trying to identify the large number of mollymawks and other seabirds feeding well off shore. Fortunately several birds obliged us by flying close inshore and the species list included Buller's Mollymawks, Northern Giant Petrel, Gannet, Spotted Shag, and Stewart Island Shag. A few Royal Albatrosses provided tantalising glimpses as they glided by far offshore but then a bird suddenly emerged over the headland and glided only a few metres over our heads - much to the appreciation of everyone. This performance was repeated again before we returned to the buses for the journey to the penguin beach. Having assembled at a convenient vantage point overlooking the beach we were soon

delighted to spot 2 Yellow-eyed Penguins climbing the sand dunes as they headed towards the sanctuary of the coastal vegetation. Soon there were more penguins arriving, and 1 or 2 departing through the gentle surf. It was a contented bunch of bird-watchers which made its way back to cheering warmth of Knox College at the end of the day.

That evening the outside temperature may have been cold but there was plenty of warmth in the vicinity of the bar and later in the dining room for the Annual Dinner. The dinner itself was an excellent repast; during which the guest speaker - Ralph Edwards - gave an enlightening talk about falconry and also displayed a Harrier, which gave a display of its own and almost stole the show as well as the offered meat.

The AGM was held on Sunday morning and in her address the President, Mrs Beth Brown, paid tribute to the many voluntary workers who maintain the activities of the Society. Special mention was made of Peter Gaze, who retired from Council this year. There being no nominations for the vacant position, Council has co-opted Derek Onley for 1 year.

The Falla Memorial Award was presented to Dr P.C. Bull and the A. T. Edgar Junior Award to Peter Langlands and Andrew Crossland.

Finally, the meeting closed with applause for the Dunedin members who had organised such an excellent weekend.

After the AGM the programme continued with 4 talks. John Darby presented us with a review of his long term research on Yellow-eyed Penguins and highlighted the concern for an endemic species whose population has declined drastically since the time of Dr Lance Richdale's pioneer work. Ken Hughey provided a humerous account of Banded Dotterel research and made a plea for members to watch for colour-banded birds. Then Chris Robertson intrigued us with his talk about Wandering Albatrosses, and finally Colin O'Donnell gave an interesting talk about bush birds in South Westland - the results of some intensive surveys of distribution and feeding habits.



There were many highlights during the weekend - the majestic Royal Albatross seen at such close quarters, the Yellow-eyed Penguins coming ashore, the Editor of *Notornis* with yet another novel hat, meeting friends old and new - if you haven't experienced an OSNZ Conference and AGM weekend these are just a few of the things you have missed out on. See you at Napier next May.

PAUL SAGAR

## Subscriptions - good & bad news

At the AGM there was a notice of motion to increase subscriptions for ordinary members to \$30.00 from \$27.50 and *pro rata* for other classes of membership, as from 1 January 1988. These increases were necessary to cover G.S.T. The meeting accepted the necessity for the increases but the motion was amended to exclude junior members (less than 20 years) from the increase and to make their subscription one half that of an ordinary member. This will *reduce* the subscription for juniors from the current level of \$20.62 to \$15.00 in 1988! The rationale behind this was the perceived necessity to encourage more young people to join the Society. Now it's up to you to get young people along to meetings and field trips, and to get them interested in the study of birds.

## Questionnaire with this issue of *Notornis*

With this issue of *Notornis* you will have received a questionnaire about the activities of the Society and what you think of them. This is *your* opportunity to have a say about all aspects of OSNZ. By completing the questionnaire promptly and either handing it to your RR or posting it to the address shown you can help Council plan for the future. Please help them to help you - complete your questionnaire and send it in now.

## Beach Patrol Scheme 1986 - Preliminary report

This report concerns the results from cards received to 31 March 1987. In 1986 4317 km were patrolled during 611 patrols. This compares well with the average of 4289 km patrolled per year during 1975-85. 13 863 seabirds were found in 1986. The average number of seabirds found per year for 1975-85 was 10 899, but the 1986 total is well below the record of 28 304 seabirds in 1985.

The most productive districts to patrol in 1986 were *Bay of Plenty* at 4.4 birds per km, followed by Wellington West (3.9) and Auckland West (3.6). Generally 1-3 birds were found per km patrolled in each month of 1986, except in August when it was nearly 13 birds per km.

Unusual finds were a Kermadec Petrel, 2 White-capped Noddies and a White Tern, the last 2 being new species for the Scheme. There were larger numbers than usual of a few species: 206 Broad-billed Prions, usually fewer than 100. 314 Lesser Broad-billed Prions, usually fewer than 50. 1023 Antarctic Prions, usually fewer than 100. 1402 Narrow-billed Prions, previous highest total 1326. 3841 Fairy Prions, usually fewer than 1000. 15 Fulmar Prions, usually fewer than 3. 759 Short-tailed Shearwaters, previous highest annual total 755. 1146 Diving Petrels, usually 200-300. 23 Stewart Island Shags, usually fewer than 10.

The following are provisional totals for each region of coast patrolled.

Coast	Birds	km
Auckland East	1303	477
Auckland West	8960	2484
Bay of Plenty	1072	244
Canterbury North	66	45
East Coast NI	117	124
North Coast SI	14	20
Otago	116	127
Southland	7	2
Taranaki	122	168
Wairarapa	12	19
Westland	2	23
Wellington South	269	127
Wellington West	1799	459

The success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 1986 was due to the efforts of many members and their friends who took part in patrols, particularly to the enthusiasm of the people who organised regular patrols. Funding from the Society (\$5000) and the NZ Lottery Board (\$10000) has enabled us to employ Christine Reed to write computer programmes to input data into the computer and to analyse them. So far, the data from the 1976-86 patrols have been entered into the computer. My thanks to the Wildlife Service (now incorporated into the Department of Conservation) for the use of computer facilities, and to Christine Reed and Ross Pickard for their assistance.

RALPH POWLES LAND, *Convener*

## Report on Moulting Scheme 1986-87

A major achievement during the year was to get the moulting data onto a computer data-base, thanks to the hard work of Christine Reed, who was supported by grants from the Society and the NZ Lottery Board's Scientific Research Distribution Committee.

Information from a total of 53 species has now been received, comprising 840 records - 554 from birds in moulting and 286 of birds not in moulting. Although the Scheme has been running since 1983, only 9 observers have contributed so far - so please let me have more records in 1987-88!

The production of a revised moulting card was delayed until Christine Reed had finished the analyses. However, it should be available later this year.

A summary of returns for 1986-87 is given below (\* = new species for the Scheme).

Species	No. cards	Observer
Kingfisher	5	D.J. Onley
Dunnock	14	D.J. Onley
Blackbird	3	D.J. Onley
Song Thrush	3	D.J. Onley
SI Tomtit	5	D.J. Onley
Yellowhead *	3	G. Elliott/B. Bell
Fantail	6	D.J. Onley
Grey Warbler	14	D.J. Onley
Silvereye	15	D.J. Onley
Bellbird	7	D.J. Onley
Chaffinch	2	D.J. Onley
Goldfinch	3	D.J. Onley
Greenfinch	7	D.J. Onley
House Sparrow	43	D.J. Onley

Total records 1986/87 - 130

Special thanks to Derek Onley for providing most of the current year's records.

Please remember that all wild birds you handle - dead or alive - can provide valuable information for the Scheme. Banders, beach patrollers and museum workers can play a particularly valuable part in data collection.

I shall be pleased to send instructions to anyone interested in participating in the moulting scheme. Anyone with moulting information still to send in should please forward it to me as soon as you can - I'm looking forward to entering it on that computer!

BEN D. BELL, *Convener*

## Nest Record Scheme - report for year ending 30 April 1987

This has been a very important year for the Nest Record Scheme. Christine Reed was employed to computerise the Scheme and with expert help from Ross Pickard (Wildlife Service, now Department of Conservation), excellent progress has been made on developing a package of programmes to store and analyse the mountain of data already on cards.

Christine started by entering the data from the Goldfinch cards (about 804) and comparing the results with a hand analysis that Dr Peter Bull carried out a couple of years ago. The computer analysis provides information on many factors such as: clutch size; laying date; laying, incubation, and nestling periods; hatching, fledging and breeding successes; height of nest (real or as a percentage of the host tree height); habitat; host tree species etc etc. I have gone through all the Blackbird cards and added information on latitude, longitude, altitude and district wherever possible. These data are now ready to be put on computer, analysed, and published, in order to show members the value of contributing to the Nest Record Scheme.

Following the publication of the Nest Record Scheme Instructions in the March 1986 volume of *Notornis* and the introduction of the new style card,

there has been a very pleasing increase of interest in nest recording. This year, 58 members of friends contributed 835 cards covering 71 species, bringing the total to 18 350 cards. There were many important contributions to the Scheme this year, particularly from Canterbury region members: Peter Reese recorded 159 nests of 27 species, Don Geddes 80 nests of 31 species, Andrew Crossland 67 nests of 13 species, Colin O'Donnell 66 nests of 27 species and Paul Sagar 55 nests, including 28 Antarctic Tern and 13 Southern Skua nests from the Snares. Other major Canterbury contributions came from Peter Howden (30), Peter Langlands (25), and Michelle Noonan (13). From other parts of the country, Rachel Hamilton sent in 37 cards, including several very detailed records of Goldfinch nests. Peter Bull contributed 35 cards, Jack Cowie 34 cards (including 27 Black-fronted Tern nests), Jim Hamilton (26), Bill Sloan (25), Justin Penney (22), Hugh Robertson (22), Bill Cash (18) and Derek Onley (18). It was particularly pleasing to receive cards for the first time from members such as Robin Guest, Rachel Hamilton, Glen Holmwood, Bill Sloan and David Stone.

35 Colonial Nest Record cards were included this year, covering the following 15 species: Gannet, Black Shag, Pied Shag, Little Shag, Spotted Shag, Royal Spoonbill, Canada Goose, Black Swan, Variable Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Black-backed Gull, White-fronted Tern and Caspian Tern.

My thanks go to all of the contributors to the Scheme and to those who have encouraged members to take part. I would also like to thank David Crockett for transferring almost the entire collection of cards to Wellington on his various trips to the capital. I hope that the rest of New Zealand will be able to match the Canterbury contribution next year!

**List of contributors:** R.B. Abbott, B.J. Alexander, B.D. Bell, M. Bowron, P.C. Bull, W.F. Cash, J.F. Cockrem, E. Coop, J.A. Cowie, N.J. Crockford, A. Crossland, B. Elliott, D.G. Geddes, A. Goodwin, A.G. Grant, D. Grant, G. Grant, G. Guest, R. Guest, R.S. Guest, J.G. Hamilton, R.M. Hamilton, T.R. Harty, J. Hawkins, R.N. Holdaway, G. Holmwood, P.J. Howden, B.R. Keeley, P. Langlands, A. Linores, J. Linscott, O. Linscott, J.L. Lloyd, C.F. McRae, C.M. Miskelly, G. Moon, F. Nieuwland, M. Noonan, C.F.J. O'Donnell, C.C. Ogle, D. Onley, G.R. Parrish, J. Penney, M.H. Powlesland, R.G. Powlesland, P.J. Reese, C. Reid, H.A. Robertson, P.M. Sagar, P. Schweigman, B. Seddon, W.H. Sloan, D. Stone, A. Sturmer, M.J. Taylor, K.V. Todd, E. Woodger, D. York.

**List of species recorded during 1986/87:** Stewart Island Kiwi 2, Crested Grebe 8, Giant Petrel 2, Gannet 1, Black Shag 1,

Pied Shag 1, Little Shag 1, Spotted Shag 1, White-faced Heron 6, Royal Spoonbill 1, Mute Swan 2, Black Swan 3, Canada Goose 7, Feral Goose 2, Paradise Shelduck 1, Mallard 24, Grey Duck 4, Shoveler 1, Scaup 1, Pheasant 1, Spotless Crake 1, Banded Rail 1, Pukeko 30, Australian Coot 1, SIPO 22, Variable Oystercatcher 10, Spur-winged Plover 16, Banded Dotterel 64, NZ Dotterel 2, Black-fronted Dotterel 2, Wrybill 2, Subantarctic Snipe 5, Pied Stilt 55, Hybrid Black x Pied Stilt 2, Southern Skua 13, Black-backed Gull 21, Red-billed Gull 9, Blacked-billed Gull 4, Black-fronted Tern 32, White-fronted Tern 4, Caspian Tern 1, Antarctic Tern 34, Feral Pigeon 11, Kaka 4, Morepork 1, Little Owl 2, Kingfisher 4, Rifleman 7, Skylark 18, Welcome Swallow 32, Pipit 3, Dunnock 19, Fernbird 5, Yellowhead 1, Grey Warbler 6, Fantail 21, Tomtit 5, Song Thrush 77, Blackbird 85, Silvereye 21, Bellbird 5, Tui 2, Yellowhammer 3, Chaffinch 8, Greenfinch 18, Goldfinch 43, Redpoll 9, House Sparrow 6, Starling 9, Myna 4, White-backed Magpie 4, Rook 1.

HUGH ROBERTSON, *Convener*

(Please note that after this report was completed a further 400+ cards were received from Canterbury members, these will be included in next years report. H.A.R.)

## Annual Report of the S.W. Pacific Recording Scheme 1986/87

A number of submissions were received during the year relating to observations made in 4 island groups during the period 1980-1986. These were:

Observer	Island Group	Period
B.R. Keeley	Fiji	Aug/Sept 1980
S. Chambers	New Caledonia	Sept 1984
S. Chambers	Vanuatu	Sept 1984
S. Chambers	Tahiti	Oct 1985
S. Chambers	Fiji	Sept/Oct 1986

J.L. MOORE, *Recorder*

## Annual Report of the Rare Birds Committee 1986/87

During the year a series of 3 articles was published in *OSNZ news* covering the reporting and identification of rare birds in New Zealand. In addition, Barrie Heather discussed related topics with members who attended the Southland Summer Camp and the Hawkes Bay Labour Weekend Camp.

Records received and accepted by the Rare Birds Committee during the past 12 months were:

**Gentoo Penguin** - 1 at the Snares on 27 and 28/12/85 (R. de Hamel, C. Miskelly, A. Tennyson, P. Johns).

**Royal Penguin** - Single birds at the Snares from 19 to 25/2/86 (C. Miskelly, A. Tennyson, R. de Hamel) and Katikati Point, Moeraki on 17 & 18/3/86 (R. Jones). Both birds were photographed.

**Juan Fernandez Petrel** - 1 briefly seen and heard at South East Island, the Chatham, on 24/3/86 is the second record of this species in New Zealand (M.J. Imber).

**Wilson's Storm Petrel** - 1 seen between Little and Great Barrier Islands on 28/5/86 (P. Battley).

**Lesser Frigatebird** - 1 found dead at Motuara Island on 28/1/87 (T. Harty).

**Intermediate Egret** - 1 photographed at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary on 5 & 7/5/86 (P.J. Reese) may have been the same bird seen at Lake Ellesmere on 2/8/86 (C. O'Donnell). 1 at Kaikohe S.F. from 25/5/86 to 2/6/86 (G. Watola, P. Miller).

**Cape Barren Goose** - 1 was seen at Whitford on 11/2/86 but it is not certain that the bird was of wild origin (A. Goodwin).

**Chestnut-breasted Shelduck** - This species is on the rare bird list but only one description was received by the Committee. A male in eclipse plumage at Lake Half, Pukanui on 26/1/86 (B. Brown).

**Wood Duck** - 1 present on the Snares from 14/11/85 until 6/3/86 and was presumed to be the same bird that was recorded there in 1982/83 and 1984/85 (C. Miskelly, P.M. Sagar).

**Nankeen Kestrel** - A bird photographed at Te Mata Peak, Havelock North on 9/5/86 and 14/6/86 was either a female or and immature (R.H. Winters, R.E. Wheeldon, K.V. Todd).

**Black-tailed Native Hen** - 1 seen at Opuatia Swamp on 16/5/86 (P. Walter).

**Painted Snipe** - A male was seen at Lake Ellesmere on 6/8/86 and is the first record for New Zealand (K. Harrison, S. Mulligan, P. Leech, P. Mercer). If we designated a 'Bird of the Year' this record would surely get it.

**Mongolian Dotterel** - 1 at the Parangahau Estuary on 8/3/86, 21/6/86 & 22/6/86 (R. & B. Heather, H.A. Robertson). 1 at Lake Ellsmere from 7 to 12/8/86 (T. Meis *et al.*).

**Hudsonian Godwit** - 1 at Jordan's Farm, Kaipara on 4/10/86 (A. Riegen, S. Davies).

**Japanese Snipe** - A *Gallinago* sp. seen at the Snares from 12 to 14/11/85 was presumed to be this species (C. Miskelly, P.M. Sagar).

**Long-tailed Skua** - 1 at Foxton Beach on 8/4/85 (J.L. & M. Moore).

**Gull-billed Tern** - Birds were seen at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary on 4 & 5/7/86 (K. Harrison, P. & J. Sagar, J. & J. Fennell) and at Taradale, Hawkes Bay, also on 4/7/86 (K.V. Todd).

**Arctic Tern** - 1 at Foxton Beach on 15 & 16/11/86 (J.L. Moore, M. Wenham).

**Sooty Tern** - At least 13 birds were seen in 2 flocks at Pakiri Beach on 27/7/86 (F.J. Taylor).

. . . and the list ends as it started, with another good record from the Snares.

**Oriental Cuckoo** - 1 at Boat Harbour, the Snare, on 10/12/86 (A. Tennyson, C. Miskelly).

J.F.M. FENNEL, *Secretary*

## Checklist Committee Report 1987

The preparation of drafts has continued - the total of species covered has now passed the halfway mark. The continued contribution of Rank Xerox (NZ) Ltd in photocopying drafts for circulation free of charge has again been appreciated.

A list of the present membership of the Committee may be helpful in view of several changes since its appointment. Members at present are: E.G. Turbott (convener), J.A. Bartle, D.H. Brathwaite, Dr B.J. Gill, Dr M.J. Imber, Dr P.R. Millener, R.J. Scarlett, R.B. Sibson, Dr J. Warham, Dr P.C. Bull (co-opted).

E.G. TURBOTT, *Convener*

## Library Report - 1987

Once again the journals and newsletters have been the mainstay of library, 43 being circulated to 44 members. Ecology Division, DSIR, receives 15 of the publications circulated. During the year we received 35 interloan requests and several enquiries from the public. Borrowing by members has been low with only 24 items being used. Our collection of books has not been well used, which is a pity as we have added some fine books to the collection through the generosity of the following - Beth Brown, John Brown, David Crockett, Barrie Heather, Paul Sagar, Betty Seddon, Dick Sibson, Michael Taylor, and Graham Turbott. Margaret Child also donated important archival material.

None of our work would have been possible without the generosity of the Director and Council of the Auckland War Memorial Museum and the kind help of Ian Thwaites and his staff.

ANTHEA GOODWIN, *Hon. Librarian*

## Banding Liason Officer - 1987

Only 2 requests for my services were made by members in the past year. One was to report sightings of banded birds and to request information on same. This was forwarded to the Banding Office for routine attention. The other, however, on behalf of 3 members of the Society raised very important considerations of fundamental concern to serious banders and indeed to the working of the Banding Scheme. It was mainly concerned with access to recoveries and entitlement to use of this information. It contained very responsible, timely and pertinent comment and suggestions. This was forwarded to the Banding Officer with a supporting letter, after first discussing it with him.

Now that the Banding Office comes under the direction of the newly constituted Department of Conservation I considered it appropriate to discuss the question of

liason with the newly appointed Director, Science and Research. The upshot was a formal written request to the Department that OSNZ should be represented on a committee to consider banding. The justification for such representation was made on the ground that, OSNZ members as banders and users of the scheme are vitally concerned with its working. In particular, those who undertake special studies are not happy with the present arrangement for access to recoveries and use in publications. This has been cause for recurring contention.

I suggested that the Society's Banding Liason Officer and 1 or more other members as considered appropriate could make a useful contribution to the overall working of such a committee. It certainly would help to satisfy the feeling of a considerable body of members who band birds to have some say in the outcome of their efforts. Moreover, it would ensure that the Liason Officer was better informed about the working of the scheme and could more intelligently represent the Society.

I find it satisfying that some members have made the effort to present such a responsible and positively presented case for improvement to the Banding Scheme. It makes one feel that the office is justified by the quality, if not the volume, of its usage.

L. GURR, *Banding Liason Officer*

## Membership of OSNZ Committees

**Checklist:** E.G. Turbott (convener), J.A. Bartle, D.H. Brathwaite, Dr B.J. Gill, Dr M.J. Imber, Dr P.R. Millener, R.J. Scarlett, R.B. Sibson, Dr J. Warham, Dr P.C. Bull.

**Rare Birds:** John Fennell (Secretary), Dr Ben Bell, Brian Bell, Barrie Heather, Paul Sagar, Dick Sibson.

The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees. The conveners of the Society's permanent schemes are listed on the inside front cover of *Notornis*.

## Robert Falla Memorial Award

At the AGM in Dunedin the President, Mrs Beth Brown, announced that the recipient of the Robert Falla Memorial Award for 1986 was Dr P.C. Bull. This announcement was greeted with prolonged applause.

The basic criteria for the award are valuable contributions to the study of birds in NZ, together with sustained service to OSNZ. Council believes that Dr Bull meets both of these requirements to an exceptionally high standard.

Peter Bull's records from Manukau Harbour began in the early Annual Reports (1939-40) and subsequent publications of the Society include articles on Red-billed Gull movements and censuses on the west coast of the Coromandel Peninsula, Silvereyes, the first NZ records of

*Pterodroma leucoptera*, and Gannet census contributions.

Peter was appointed to the staff of DSIR and assisted Count Dr K.A. Wodzicki in work on introduced mammals and research on the rabbit, including its parasites (which earned a D.Sc.), but his interest in birds continued. He investigated the mainland Sooty Shearwater colony on the Wellington Coast between Makara and Titahi Bay. In 1953 he published on marked Blackbirds (a study at Lower Hutt that he continued for many years) and in 1955 compiled the annual ringing report. In 1956 he was elected North Island Vice President and served as President from May 1957 until 1960. While President, he revived the Beach Patrol Scheme (which became a permanent OSNZ activity) and published (with B.W. Boesen) a preliminary analysis of storm-killed birds 1939-59 and a further analysis of the 1961 results. Peter had always taken an interest in the OSNZ banding scheme and when this was taken over by the Dominion Museum he and A. Blackburn were OSNZ representatives on the advisory committee. His interest in introduced birds, encouraged by his Blackbird study at Lower Hutt, was extended when he became responsible for research of their economic impact on orchards and horticulture. Papers on the Rook were published in 1957 and 1975.

After a 7 year spell following his Presidency, Peter Bull accepted appointment as Council member in 1967. Having recruited him, his colleagues would not let him retire - he remained on the Council until 1972-73 and was re-elected for a further term in 1974-86.

During this period his work at Ecology Division became more ornithological. He published (with D.G. Dawson) on the mortality of birds during the Canterbury snowstorm of November 1967. In 1968, he suggested a bird distribution study based on species lists from the 10 000 yard grid squares, and in 1970 published an account of this new mapping scheme. Most NZ ornithologists will know how this scheme developed after some years of annual reporting by Bull and Gaze, into the Bird Atlas, first published as a provisional edition (1978) and later (1985) in its definitive form by Bull, Gaze and Robertson. His papers in the 1970s were related to this project and to the subject of bird census on native forests.

The knowledge gained in work on introduced birds is summarised in Bull's contribution to the Readers Digest *Complete Book of New Zealand Birds* (1985). These are the definitive accounts of Skylark, Dunnock, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Yellowhammer, Cirl Bunting, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Redpoll, House Sparrow, Starling, Myna, Australian Magpie, and Rook in New Zealand.

C.A. FLEMING & R.S. SLACK

## **A.T. Edgar Junior Members Award**

At the AGM in Dunedin the President announced that Andrew Crossland and Peter Langlands, both from Canterbury, were the recipients of the A.T. Edgar Junior Members Award for 1987.

In making the award mention was made that both Peter and Andrew have shown initiative and skill in setting up their own projects and contributing to Society schemes. Both show good skills and knowledge of bird identification. They have recorded many unusual birds in Canterbury, as well as rarities such as Asiatic Dowitcher and Gull-billed Tern at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. They are regular supporters of OSNZ activities in Canterbury, attending most field trips and being major contributors to the Christchurch Metropolitan Bird Mapping Scheme.

Their personal projects include monthly counts of birds at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary and Bromley Sewage Ponds (jointly), monitoring wetland birds on the Kaiapoi gravel pits (Peter), and examining the effects of reclamation on the city's main Pied Stilt breeding area on the Heathcote Loop (Andrew).

## **Projects Assistance Fund Grants**

At its May meeting Council considered 3 requests for assistance from the Projects Assistance Fund and funds were allocated as follows.

**Nelson Region** - \$315 to cover the costs of completing an aerial survey of Golden Bay in June 1987 as part of the National Wader count. In this region South Island Pied Oystercatchers are notoriously difficult to count because they roost at high tide mainly on farmland. These roost sites seem to be very variable and are often out of sight of roadways.

**Dr R.J. Pierce** - \$650 to cover travel costs in studying Banded Dotterel migration. About 1600 birds have been banded in New Zealand over the past 2 seasons. However, banding is only the first stage in any banding study, and must be followed up with efforts to locate banded birds in post-breeding flocks, particularly on the wintering grounds.

**Summer Field Study Course for junior members, RRs and Council members** - up to \$4000 to aid junior members travel to Farewell Spit for a 2-week summer course in December 1987 - January 1988.

## **OSNZ Annual Conference & AGM, Napier, May 1988**

For those members who like to plan ahead then please note that the next Annual Conference and AGM of the Society will be based at the Kennedy Park Motel & Motor Park, Napier.

## **NZ Antarctic Research Proposals 1988/89**

The Ross Dependency Research Committee invites proposals for research

to be undertaken as part of the 1988/89 NZ Antarctic Research Programme. Research proposals may cover any of the Earth, Life or Atmospheric sciences and be directed to a better understanding of the unique environment of Antarctica or those natural phenomena most suited to research conducted in southern latitudes.

Proposals can be for long or short term research, based at NZ's Antarctic stations or in the field, and cooperative ventures with overseas organisations.

Applications are reviewed by the Biological, Physical, or Earth Sciences Working Groups of the Ross Dependency Research Committee.

Applications close on 31 July 1987 and applicants will be informed of the status of their proposals in late December 1987

Further information on Antarctic research and how to prepare a proposal is available from: Secretary, RDRC, c/o DSIR Head Office, P.B., Wellington.

## **Miranda banders in action again**

Last year the Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG) made it known to the Miranda Naturalists' Trust (MNT) that they were very keen for us to catch and band waders. Of particular interest were those waders that breed in the Arctic, as this would further the knowledge of these birds and their migration routes. The AWSG has done a lot of banding in Australia in the past few years and was keen to see if some of 'their' birds come to New Zealand.

A banding committee was formed through the MNT, headed by Stephen Davies, as Stephen had the most experience of catching birds using cannon nets. The outcome of this was the revival of the Miranda Banders, a group of 15 or so interested people who were keen to help catch birds.

Although the banding was to be done through the MNT, we felt that Miranda was not a suitable site for cannon netting and that the obvious place was Jordan's Farm on the South Kaipara Harbour. Graham Jordan allowed us free range to use his fields and we are most grateful to him for his co-operation.

Our first 3 attempts to catch birds were unsuccessful due to various reasons. This left us feeling a bit frustrated as Jordans Farm is such a good site. However, our 4th attempt, on 28/2/87, went well even though we had only 9 people and the weather was the worst of the 4 days. After 2 hours of twinkling we finally got a group of Knots in the catching area and were able to fire. Once the net had been fired everyone worked very quickly to cover the trapped birds with hessian in order to calm them. We then set about extracting the catch and it was only then that we began to realise just how many birds we had caught. It took

at least 4 of us 4 hours continuous work to extract all the birds and get them into the hessian keeping cages. The processing took another 5 hours. Each bird was banded and aged, and weight, moult and wing-length recorded before the bird was released.

At the end of the day we had banded 1 Bar-tailed Godwit, 76 SIPOs and 675 Knots, an impressive and very worthwhile catch.

Of special interest were 7 Knots already banded, 4 of which were Australian - all of them had been banded at Queenscliff, Victoria. Three of them were banded as adults, on 31/10/82, 19/10/85 and most interesting, 8/11/86. So it looks certain that at least some of 'our' birds arrive here via Victoria. The 4th bird was banded as a juvenile on 3/6/84 and it turns out that it was banded on the same day as a Knot was picked up at Karaka on 19/5/85. It is quite possible that some young birds winter in Victoria and then come to New Zealand during the following summer before returning to the Arctic to breed.

Two of the other banded birds had NZ bands and another had a band so worn that no numbers were visible. That band has been sent to the BTO in England in the hope that they can work out its origin.

The weight of the birds we caught varied considerably, from about 90 to 195 g, the lighter birds being young hatched last northern summer and staying in NZ for the southern winter. The heavy birds were adults which were laying down fat for their flight north to the Arctic breeding grounds. Most of these birds leave NZ during March.

We hope to receive news of 'our' Knots in the years to come and hopefully we shall be able to catch some more birds next summer.

**ADRIAN RIEGEN &  
STEPHEN DAVIES**

## **Co-operative feeding between gannets and shearwaters**

While in the Marlborough Sounds on 20/2/87 I noticed an interaction in the feeding behaviour of Fluttering Shearwaters and Australian Gannets.

A gannet would fly almost level over the calm water, while 2 or 3 shearwaters would fly on both sides of it. When the gannet dived the shearwaters would also dive, at exactly the same time and in the same location.

There are at least 2 possible reasons for this type of behaviour.

- (1) The shearwaters use the gannet to indicate where prey are available.
- (2) The gannet displaces the prey of the shearwaters towards the surface, where the shearwaters are able to catch it more easily.

**PETER LANGLANDS**

## Pen friend wanted

Lin Chih-Cheng (P.O. Box 61, Miaoli, Taiwan) a 37 year-old avid birdwatcher seeks a NZ pen friend.

## Little Grebes on Jack's Lake, Bay of Islands

Jack's lake is a large man-made lake about 400m west of lake Owhareiti. Little Grebes were seen on 12 of the 14 visits made to the lake between April 1986 and February 1987.

There were 2 young with a pair of adults in September 1986, and 1 young with 2 adults in February 1987. An immature, in plumage as described by Pizzey, was seen in December 1986.

Adults were in breeding plumage throughout the year and I did not recognise a non-breeding plumage. However, grebes were rarely seen between October and December. Perhaps this is when they assume a non-breeding plumage?

A grebe seen in February had extensive amounts of chestnut on the throat, chin, and cheeks, which makes me wonder where our Little Grebes come from.

Other interesting birds seen at the lake during this period included a pair of Scaup, 40 Grey Teal in February (a large number for the Far North), Bittern, feral Turkey, and nesting Little Shags.

GEORGE WATOLA

## Stephens Island - Cattle Egrets & other birds

While I worked on Stephens Island during April/May 1986 a new bird was recorded for the island.

On 29/4/86 a very tired Cattle Egret was actually caught. The bird was extremely thin and weak and so it was kept overnight and fed with worms. The next day it was released but was very reluctant to leave the island and human company. It remained close to the houses for another 3 days, sleeping in the coal shed at No. 3 house. Each morning and evening the Cattle Egret would wait at the back door of the house for its quota of worms. It was remarkable just how tame the bird became in such a short time. While I dug for worms in the garden it would be around my feet and one day even followed me inside. Another day it visited me on the fence line in the airstrip area.

The egret was gone on the afternoon of 4 May, even though there was a strong northerly wind.

Two more Cattle Egrets were seen on the island on 2 May and 1 was present on 1 & 2/6/86.

Other birds to populate the island in recent years are Paradise Shelduck and Welcome Swallow. Five years ago there

was a pair of Paradise Shelducks living on the island, but with the building of the dam the population increased rapidly and now up to 5 pairs inhabit the island, although the highest number seen is 13.

The Welcome Swallow population also increased rapidly. In 1985 it was unusual to see one swallow but now up to 24 on a fence line is common and the lighthouse keeper has recorded up to 30 Welcome Swallows on the island. As yet breeding has not been recorded.

Another new bird for Stephens Island, and quite a surprise, is the Antipodes Island Parakeet. Yes, these were put there. To date 15 have been released. They were kept in an aviary on the island for a few weeks and now are living in Keepers Bush, where they have adapted well to island life (all are captive-bred birds). They even investigate Tuatara burrows without mishap.

W.F. CASH

## Black Stilt winter migration

The 1986/87 breeding season for Black Stilts was reasonably good. Ten breeding pairs were located, 9 of which produced a total of 39 eggs. A further 6 eggs were received from a captive pair held at the National Wildlife Centre, Mount Bruce.

Including sub-adults and birds seen at Lake Ellesmere, there were 59 Black Stilts counted at the beginning of the breeding season. Subsequently, 17 chicks fledged, of which 15 are presumed to be still alive. All of these chicks were reared by 2 black parents, as we have limited the use of cross-fostering (i.e. taking eggs from Black Stilts for rearing by pied and hybrid stilts) techniques over the past 2 breeding seasons.

One of the main reasons for this change in management is that pied and hybrid foster parents usually migrate out of the MacKenzie Basin in winter. The cross-fostered Black Stilt chicks have also left with their foster parents.

Of the 9 1-year old birds seen in the MacKenzie Basin over summer but not over the winter months, only 3 have been recorded in other areas.

OSNZ winter counts usually locate 4 or 5 Black Stilts at Kawhia Harbour but only 1 banded bird has been recorded. There is an urgent need to locate other banded Black Stilts which have migrated, as these birds may form a significant portion of the total Black Stilt population. To date 81 fledged chicks have been fitted with individual colour band combinations. However, only 28 of these have been seen recently. There are also a number of unbanded birds not yet reported.

OSNZ members can help significantly in this project by closely observing stilt flocks throughout New Zealand and

checking for colour and metal bands. Some Pied stilts have also been banded.

Colour bands are usually placed on the tarsus and can be seen above the ankle joint. A few birds may be banded on the tibia, above the knee. Stilts banded since 1985 generally have no metal band - this is an attempt to minimise injury risks.

Accurate identification of band combinations is essential. Drawings of plumage (e.g. white under the tail or on the face) can be extremely useful in identification. We would be also interested in plumage drawings of unbanded dark hybrids seen elsewhere. A brochure on the field identification of Black Stilts and their hybrids is available from me at the Department of Conservation, Private Bag, Twizel. Reports of black and hybrid stilts should also be sent to this office.

For the first time on record, a Black Stilt (from a Black-Black pair) has in this last season, taken its chicks outside of the MacKenzie Basin. They were seen at Lake Ellesmere in late March 1987, but since have left the area. Two of the 3 chicks are colour-banded and we would be grateful to receive reports of any subsequent sightings of these birds.

Most stilts from the MacKenzie Basin are thought to migrate to the east coast of the South Island (many congregating at Lake Ellesmere) and then move northwards.

~~The contribution of as many OSNZ members as possible to this project is extremely important to the follow-up observations of this conservation effort.~~ Thank you.

CHRISTINE REED, Conservation Officer

## Avian family-group names

The Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature of the International Ornithological Committee has prepared a list of established names of avian family-group taxa (subtribes to super families) and their synonyms as the first step in the process of writing an application to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to stabilise use of these names. The SCON wishes to obtain input from all interested ornithologists and zoologists on this list and its proposed application to the ICZN. The list is available to anyone who is interested and willing to examine it carefully and provide SCON with corrections, additions, comments, and suggestions. This list of avian family-group names is unofficial and should not be used for any purposes other than just mentioned.

Copies of the list may be obtained by writing to E.G. Turbott, Convener, Checklist Committee, c/o Auckland Institute & Museum, Private Bag, Auckland.

## Kerguelen Petrel found inland in Hawkes Bay

A corpse in good condition except for the back, which was bare of feathers, was picked up by David Lewis on his property in Puketitiri on 13/9/86. Identification of the bird as a Kerguelen Petrel was made by Rob Wheeler and confirmed by Russell Thomas.

Puketitiri is near the Black Birch and Kaweka Ranges and about 35 km from the Hawkes Bay coast. Three days beforehand there had been a strong south-west wind with light showers.

K.V. TODD

## Beach Patrollers

1. I have a new address: Conservation Sciences Centre, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington.

2. Please use the new format card, which has columns to indicate the age of specimens (adult, juvenile, unknown). Your RR and I have supplies.

3. If you completed beach patrols many years ago but never filled in a card for them, even if you found nothing, please send me the details. Now that all the information is being placed on computer file old records can be readily added to the scheme.

4. I have reprints of many of the annual Beach Patrol summaries from *Notornis*. If you would like reprints please write and let me know the years results that you would like.

5. I have not received any albatross or mollymawk heads from fresh beach patrol specimens. They are required for the preparation of a guide to the identification of this group of seabirds and so the guide will assist you to identify beach wrecks. The heads are urgently required - very few are found on Wellington beaches. Please send them frozen and well wrapped, via courier or air, with instructions that the package be stored in a freezer, and with my work phone number (Wellington 846-069) on it.

RALPH POWLESLAND, *Beach Patrol Scheme organiser*

## Banded Dotterel breeding in railway yard

Selwyn Egan of New Zealand Railways freight yard at Smart Road, Fitzroy, New Plymouth reports that there were at least 6 Banded Dotterel nests in the 10 ha yard during the past season. Some chicks were fledged. Thanks NZR!

JOHN CLARK

## Native Pigeon mange

Recently I examined 13 Native Pigeons held in the Taranaki Museum's freezer. None contained any gut nematodes or cestodes but this is probably because the

pigeons vegetarian diet of soft shoots, flowers and berries restricts opportunities for the transmission of helminth parasites. The gut contents of the 13 birds comprised puriri and tawa berries, kowhai leaves and flowers, and some unidentified leaves and fruits.

All 13 pigeons were infected with the hypopes or nymphs of a sarcoptic subcutaneous mite. Infection was restricted to the breast feather tracts and loads ranged from 100 to 3000. The mange appeared to be aseptic and benign and not obviously related to host sex, mass or season.

JOHN CLARK

## Back Numbers of NZ Bird Notes & Notornis

Numbers of some issues of *NZ Bird Notes & Notornis* are now so low that I am unable to supply them to prospective buyers, except as photocopies. Therefore please would any members who are willing to donate/sell the following copies to make up a complete set contact me (Notornis Back Numbers, c/o Mrs M. Bishop, Mangakura Road, RD 3 Helensville).

The issues needed are:- Volume 2 parts 1,2,3,4, & 5; volume 3 part 1; volume 4 parts 7 & 8; volume 5 part 7; volume 7 parts 6,7, & 8 plus index; volume 17 part 3. M. BISHOP, *Notornis* Back Numbers

## Changes of RRs

At its May meeting Council confirmed the following new RRs - Anthea Goodwin taking over from Beth Brown in South Auckland and Stella Rowe taking over from Folkert Nieuwland in Waikato. Later in the year there will be a new RR in the Far North, as Laurie Howell is departing overseas. The addresses and phone numbers of all RRs may be found on the inside back cover of *Notornis*.

Council expresses sincere thanks to Laurie, Beth & Folkert for their services to the Society during their time as RR.

## Regional Roundup

**Far North:** During Anniversary Weekend 145 km of beach were patrolled for 109 birds recovered. The dune lakes were also surveyed during this weekend and the highlights were - 13 Dabchicks, 13 Australian Little Grebes, 2 Hoary-headed Grebes, 8 Australasian Bitterns, and 1571 Paradise Shelducks. Meanwhile there were some interesting waders at Parengarenga, including 1 Grey Plover, 2 Greenshanks, 1 Large Sand Dotterel, and 3 Curlew Sandpipers.

A Channel-billed Cuckoo was recorded at Kimberly Road, Ngataki on 28/10/86 by Alice Taylor. The bird subsequently shifted to a Moreton Bay Fig at the Kauri Flat NZ Forest Service HQ about mid-December, where it remained until late January 1987. (Laurie Howell)

**Auckland:** Our April meeting had an attendance of nearly 90 to hear John Dowding's account of recent visits to Tiritiri, Little Barrier, Stanley and Cuvier Islands, illustrated by really excellent slides. This was followed in May by Paul Schofield who recounted his adventures, first of all aboard *Totorore* with Gerry Clark and subsequently on the remote islands of Marion and Gough, both of which are mere specks in the southern ocean, but enormously important for birds.

Tiritiri featured again, from 3 to 5/4/87, when we conducted bird counts along a series of experimental transects to begin a programme of monitoring changes during the revegetation of the island. It was a delight to be among Saddlebacks and abundant Bellbirds, during a weekend of good fellowship and perfect weather. Sara Brouwer is now busy analysing the data by microcomputer means. We are also looking into the practicality of sorting the region's beach patrol and other records by micro.

Easter saw a group on Little Barrier, others in the Hunua Ranges in search of Kokako, and a party of 30 voyaging on the Kaipara Harbour. A little more was learned about wader roosts and the tides of this vast harbour and we enjoyed good views of skuas in both light and dark phases. The large turn out continues to be a pleasing trend in field trip attendances. (Michael Taylor)

**South Auckland:** The Auckland Regional Authority asked for help with their planned projects to access the bird and plant life in the Hunua Ranges, and later the Waitakeres. Their late decision to do the bird work at Easter caused me to wonder whether sufficient people would be available. However, despite the fact that Auckland had 2 trips arranged, I was able to get a strong team of volunteers and the work went exceedingly well. Blessed by fine calm weather, we were able to get teams on to the high ridges of the Hunuas early both mornings. Kokako records exceeded expectations and although the definitive figure has yet to be released, I can safely say it will be well into the 20s. Counts by other agencies in recent years have not exceeded 15 birds. We look forward to further work in this interesting area.

Cattle Egrets appeared this season as follows: 15 at AkaAka on 10/4 and the same number at nearby Maioro on 17/5; 6 at Kidd's Farm, Seagrove, about 14/4, and earliest of all a single on the western edge of Lake Whangape of 30/3. Single White Herons are at the Weymouth to Bottletop Bay area and at Miranda.

3 Grey-tailed Tattlers were seen at Access Bay, Firth of Thames, on 29/3 and 2 remain on 17/5. A Wrybill count on 17/5 provided a total of 3 000, with 1 100 in one flock in Manukau Harbour.

The Firth of Thames has also had an elusive Marsh Sandpiper for several months, and this was still present on 14/5.

20 Rooks were at Miranda on 17/5 and there were another 12 at Mataitai. Ray Pierce, on a search for banded Banded Dotterels, found 119 dotterels at Miranda and 2 of these were banded, 73 at Mataitai (1 banded), and 13 and Kawakawa Bay (no bands). A Song Thrush, singing very near my home at Red Hill, has incorporated a burst of unmistakable Spur-winged Plover language in to his repertoire - an astonishing performance! (Beth Brown)

**Gisborne/Wairoa:** Jim Henley and Mavis Williams recorded a Nankeen Kestrel in the Gisborne Botanical Gardens on 19/12/86. It was seen to chase, catch, pluck and eat a House Sparrow.

Ted Jones reported a wreck of Sooty Shearwaters at Opoutama Beach, Mahia, on 28/11/86. Some 128 birds were counted over 2.2 km of beach - that's 1 bird every 18 m.

On 6/1/87, the annual Canada Goose count and banding took place. Most birds moult at Whakaki and Ohuia Lagoons and this year there were 1197 (including 262 juveniles) Canada Geese on Whakaki and 269 (160 juveniles) at Ohuia Lagoon. Another 68 birds were on other coastal sites, with further 35 birds inland. A grand total of 1569 Canada Geese in northern Hawkes Bay.

The mixed colony of Black-billed Gulls and White-fronted Terns at the Wairoa River bar had small success for the first time in a number of years. About 40 each of gulls and terns fledged. A few White-fronted Terns were still on eggs on 20/12/86.

Pride of place among our waders was a group of 6 Asiatic Whimbrels which appeared at the Oraka Estuary, Mahia, on 24/1/87. They stayed through remainder of the summer and 4 were still present on 21/4. (Geoff Foreman)

**Hawkes Bay:** 11 Hawkes Bay members began 1987 activities with a week in January at 'The Roost', Kaiaua. A morning and an evening high tide attracted us to Access Bay to see waders in their thousands coming off their feeding grounds to congregate in this confined area. It was a most thrilling experience to watch them and list the many species. Among the waders were several species which we do not see often in our own region, including 9 Eastern Curlews, 1 Grey-tailed Tattler, 2 Terek Sandpipers, and 3 Curlew Sandpipers. We also had the pleasure of a visit from 3 South Auckland members, which was most appreciated by us all.

Monthly field trips began in February with a wader check at Westshore when 40 Golden Plovers, 140+ Bar-tailed Godwits and 1 Pectoral Sandpiper were seen.

Sentry Box Reserve, near the Ruahine Ranges, was selected for our March trip

and the showery day somewhat dampened our plans. Nevertheless 15 species were recorded, the most conspicuous being NZ Pigeons and the most vocal were Spur-winged Plovers.

2 Black-fronted Terns were recorded in early February and their numbers have since increased to 32, including 1 with bands. A White Heron arrived for the winter on 18/3. A White-winged Black Tern, in winter plumage, first seen on 18/3 still frequents the same pond at East Clive. 2 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos have been in the Te Awanga district for several months and more recently at Maraetotara. 21 Cattle Egrets from the 1986 flock stayed near the Hurimoana Swamp until December before disappearing. Since then 4 have arrived for the 1987 winter. A Gull-billed Tern and 5 Royal Spoonbills were at Ahuriri on 9/5/87. (K.V. Todd)

**Manawatu/Wanganui:** 6 members covered both sides of the Manawatu Estuary on 1/3 and the birds recorded included 358 Bar-tailed Godwits, 263 Knots, 48 Golden Plovers, 1 Far Eastern Curlew, 1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 58 Banded Dotterels, 19 Wrybills, 5 SIPOs, 8 VOCs, 225 Pied Stilts, 4 Royal Spoonbills, 1 Little Egret, 4 Little Terns, 11 Caspian Terns and 15 Pukekos. Other Manawatu Estuary sightings come from J.L. & M. Moore who reported a Greenshank on 30/1/87 and a Pectoral Sandpiper on 14/3. Michael Wenham reported a Grey Plover at the estuary on 23 & 25/11/86.

Malcolm Olsen reports that the Ohau Estuary is now an area of interest. A visit on 25/2/87 produced the following list: 51 VOCs, 79 Pied Stilts, 23 Banded Dotterels, 16 Black Shags, 3 Caspian Terns, 6 White-faced Herons, 6 Little Shags, and 11 Welcome Swallows.

On 11/1/87 8 members visited the Wildlife Service's waterfowl management/research area at Puke Puke. Steve McGill very kindly guided the group around. We started with a look at Red-legged Partridge breeding operations and then went to the main lagoon, where the water level was low with mud exposed but there was no sign of any Black-fronted Dotterels. Species seen included 33 Canada Geese, 8 Paradise Shelduck, 110 Black Swans, 107 Shovelers, 4 Dabchicks, 86 Pied Stilts, 13 Spur-winged Plovers and 1 Bittern. A visit to the west lagoon revealed 5 Dabchicks (including a family of 4 being dive-bombed by a Harrier), 10 Spur-winged Plovers and 5 Black Swans.

Ormond Torr, Philp Battley and Graham Randle have been busy in the Wanganui area. On the lower reaches of the Wanganui River they report 3 Royal Spoonbills on 23/2 & 1/3 and juvenile Royal Spoonbills were seen on 31/1. 18 Knots were present on 23/2, a good number for the area, and 13 Banded Dotterels were recorded on 15/2.

A visit to Turakina Estuary on 14/3 produced a good list, including 31 Bar-tailed Godwits, 11 Spur-winged Plovers, 1 SIPO, 6 Black-fronted Dotterels, 12 Caspian Terns and 100+ White-fronted Terns.

Graham Randle has been in action rescuing albatrosses and shearwaters. On 4/3, during a big southerly storm, 3 Wandering Albatrosses were found near Wanganui. All appeared to be young birds, 1 still had down around its neck. 2 of these birds survived to be released. (Lindsay Davies)

**Canterbury:** Attendance at evening meetings and field trips has been rather disappointing lately and so the local committee are trying a publicity drive to attract more members and prospective members to participate in local activities.

Recent sightings of interest include a NZ Falcon seen on Port Hills by Ken Hughey on 14/5; 30 Royal Spoonbills and a Little Egret at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary; and up to 4 Keas in suburban Christchurch.

The local office of the Department of Conservation, assisted by OSNZ members, is continuing the monthly counts of all wetland birds at Lake Ellesmere. During the April count a record number of birds for the lake was counted - 92 500. Results from the May count are still to be collated but provisional totals include 3 Little Terns, 11 Red-necked Stilts, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, 1 Australian Coot, 1 Crested Grebe, 20+ White Herons, 22 Cattle Egrets (including 1 with a wing tag), and c.1500 Banded Dotterels. (Paul Sagar)

**Otago:** 15 members and friends enjoyed a survey of the Waipori Wetlands, despite the weather. 30 species were reported - 15 native, 5 self-introduced and 10 introduced. The number of Fernbirds recorded was down but this is most likely due to the weather conditions. Only 1 Pukeko was heard and none seen. A harrier with dangling legs has been in the area for at least 3 years.

Anne Hocken saw a Canada Goose at the back of Brighton on 11/2. The tattler was still present at Papanui on 6/2/87. Janice Jones saw 2 Snares Crested Penguins during the weekend of 21/2. I found a Black-fronted Dotterel nest on a beach in the Taieri River, downstream from Outram. Unfortunately the nest was destroyed by floodwaters a week later. However, 2 adults and 2 juveniles were seen by a lagoon at Outram in the second week of February.

It appears that the Gannets at the Nuggets are not breeding there this year. On 9/1 Dave York and I saw 4 adults roosting on the rocks but no nests were present. (Peter Schweigman)