

OSNZ news

No.47 June, 1988

Note Deadline for the September issue will be 21st August, 1988.

Editorial

Members will have noticed some new features in recent issues of *OSNZ news*. These include a photograph and short account of some of the Society's office holders and the use of photographs to illustrate and add interest to articles.

Further changes are planned. At its May meeting Council approved the recommendation that a 12-page issue of *OSNZ news* may be produced when sufficient material is available. In addition, there is to be a new regular feature in the form of a rarities report, compiled by Derek Onley. Details of the latter were discussed with RRs in May. Other regular features are planned and these will be announced once details are finalised.

The impetus for these changes came from members responses to the questionnaire sent out last year. The success or otherwise of these changes now depends upon you. My job is to edit and collate each issue of *OSNZ news*, not to write it. Consequently if there are to be any 12-page issues I need to receive more contributions from members, so do not sit back and expect the other person to write something - do it yourself. Now I will look forward to a mailbox bulging with accounts of your activities, observations, comments etc. And please don't forget that suitable photographs and other illustrations with such articles are also welcome. Black and white prints produce the best results but colour prints are usually equally acceptable.

PAUL SAGAR, *Editor*

Taiko burrow discovered

After a decade of research in the south western area of the main Chatham Island the first burrow of the Taiko (*Pterodroma magentae*) has been located.

A radio telemetric tracking system assisted in pin-pointing the burrow site during the latest in a series of Chatham Island Taiko expeditions.

This particular phase was a joint venture between the Taiko Research Project team, led by David Crockett, and the Department of Conservation team under the leadership of Michael Imber.

Monitoring stations were set up at 6 sites, including a mobile station of Gerry Clark's yacht *Totorore*.

Ten further Taiko were banded this season bringing the total number to 40 individual birds banded. Transmitters were attached to the two central tail feathers of 10 Taiko and these birds were tracked for the following 3 months.

The first burrow was found on 6 November 1987 and a Taiko was observed at the mouth of the burrow on 23 November, thus confirming this long-awaited event.

This discovery is a major breakthrough and the information gained will greatly assist in the location of further burrows.

My sincere thanks to all expedition personnel, landowners, and members of the Chatham Island community for their generous support.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, *Expedition Leader*



David Crockett examines the recently discovered Taiko burrow.



20th International Ornithological Congress 1990

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).

The First Circular of the Congress is now available. This gives initial details of the Congress symposia themes, programme, pre- and post- Congress excursions in NZ and adjacent regions, and critical dates for people wishing to register for the Congress.

Any OSNZ members interested in the Congress, but who have yet to put them-

selves on the mailing list to receive the First Circular, should write to:

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

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.) SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the Annual General Meeting held in Napier on 21 May 1988 called for a Special General Meeting of the Society to consider amending the Constitution to meet the requirements of the Inland Revenue Department in relation to the charitable status of the Society.

The Annual General Meeting recommended that the Constitution be amended as follows:-

- (i) That Rule 16 be amended by including the words:-

“alters the charitable status of the society or” between the words “in any way” and “affects”

The new Rule 16 reads:-

“The constitution shall not be added to, altered or rescinded except by resolution of the Society in general meeting after due notice of motion of the proposed change has been given in the notice convening such general meeting.

No addition to or alteration or rescission of the rule shall be approved if it in any way *alters the charitable status of the Society or affects Rule 17 (Winding up).*”

- (ii) That rule 17 be amended by inserting the word “charitable” between the words “any” and “body” in paragraph (a) and that it be further amended by inserting the words “charitable purpose” after the word “other” in paragraph (c). The word “manner” to be deleted from the same paragraph.

the new Rule 17 reads:-

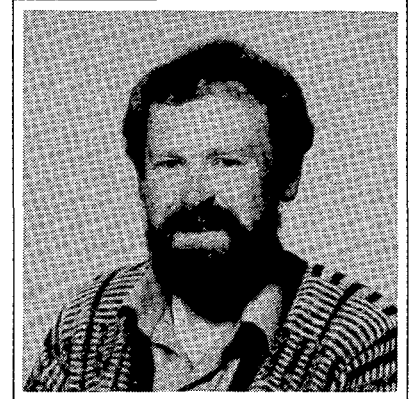
“In the event of the Society being wound up the surplus assets and funds after payment of the Society’s liabilities and the expenses of winding up shall be disposed of within New Zealand in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) By transfer of the said surplus assets and funds to any *charitable* body or organisation whose objects are in whole or part similar to those of the Society, or
(b) For the purposes of study and research in the field of zoology and the study of animals in their environment, or
(c) In any other *charitable purpose* decided by the members and approved either by the Royal Society of New Zealand or the National Research Advisory Council.

Provided, however, that under no circumstances shall any part of the income or other funds of the Society be used directly or indirectly for the private pecuniary profit of any member of the Society.”

The Special General Meeting will be held in the School Room, Auckland Museum, at 7.45 p.m. on Tuesday, 6th September, 1988.

S.J. TRIGGS
Hon. Secretary.



Hugh Robertson - Council Member, Field Investigation Officer and Nest Record Scheme Convenor.

Hugh joined the Manawatu Branch of the OSNZ at the age of 12, in 1970. Sybil Creswell, Ian Andrew and Lou Gurr fostered his early interests in Beach Patrolling, Nest Recording and studying Starlings breeding in nest-boxes. Hugh spent six weeks in 1972-1973 on David Crockett’s second expedition to the Chatham Islands and was lucky enough to have been present when Taikos were first seen at the Tuku Valley, on 6 January 1983 – he was also present when the first Taikos were caught on 1 January 1978.

Hugh received the OSNZ Junior Ornithologist Award in 1974. The following year, he started a Zoology degree at Massey University and completed a BSc(Hons) in 1978 with a thesis on the carrion-feeding behaviour of Harriers. While at Massey he did a lot of birdwatching in the Manawatu, with fellow students such as Mike Dennison, John Cockrem, Ralph Powlesland and John Innes. They counted the birds of the Manawatu estuary every month for three years and surveyed most of the coastal Manawatu wetlands. Summers were frequently spent birding on the Chathams, Farewell Spit, or other exotic places.

In 1979, Hugh was appointed to the staff of Ecology Division, DSIR, in Lower Hutt, and a year later he took up an NRAC Postgraduate Fellowship to do a doctorate at the Edward Grey Institute, Oxford University. His thesis, on the ecology of British pigeons and doves, was completed

in 1984, and he then returned to his job as a scientist with Ecology Division. His main professional interest is a study of the daily and seasonal movements of Tuis in Hawkes Bay, and their role as pollinators and seed dispersers of native plants. In addition he is involved in a study of the Rarotongan Flycatcher, or Kakerori, and serves on the NZ Executive Committee for the 20th IOC.

Beyond his work responsibilities, Hugh does monthly counts of waders on the eastern shore of Lake Wairarapa, organises the monthly Wellington Harbour survey, tutors at the Ward passerine banding workshops, and is an active beach patroller.

Please return those extra copies of Notornis

Some members of the Society may have been surprised to receive two issues of the March 1988 *Notornis* recently. This was due to an error on my part, and will deplete the Society's stock of back numbers available for sale. Therefore it would be appreciated if duplicate copies could be returned to P.O. Box 6006, Wellesley Street P.O., Auckland. My thanks to those members who have already returned copies, and my apologies for the inconvenience caused.

W.L. ORMOND, *Hon Treasurer*

Annual Conference & AGM - Napier

The Annual Conference and AGM of the Society was held in Napier during the weekend of 20-22 May. Once again this was a live-in conference and all activities associated with the weekend, with the obvious exceptions of the field trips, were held in the spacious setting of the Kennedy Park Motel complex.

Council met on the Friday and dealt with a long and varied agenda. This included the annual reports of the Society's various committees and schemes, and consideration of applications for grants from the Projects Assistance Fund. These are detailed elsewhere in the newsletter.

Regional Representatives met on Friday evening and Saturday morning and discussed a wide range of topics regarding the various activities of the Society. There was also an opportunity for discussion of matters arising from the Council meeting.

Meanwhile other members of the Society were enjoying a trip to the Ahuriri Estuary.

There were three excellent talks on Saturday afternoon. Chris Robertson told us about trends in the population of Gannets at the Cape Kidnappers colony over the past 40 or so years; Hugh

Robertson outlined his study of a colour-banded population of Tuis in Hawkes Bay; and John McLennon presented a very good summary of the ecology/breeding of kiwis.

This was followed by the AGM, which was chaired by Vice President David Crockett in the absence of the President, Mrs Beth Brown, who unfortunately was not able to attend because of ill-health. Before addressing the meeting David referred to the recent deaths of Dr Kazimierz Wodzicki and Sir Charles Fleming, both long-standing members of the Society. Chris Robertson and Ben Bell then paid tribute to the outstanding achievements of both men.

In his address David Crockett paid tribute to the many voluntary workers who maintain the activities of the Society. These include RRs, scheme organisers, the editors of the Society's publications, and Council members. Particular mention was made of the revision of the checklist, which is proceeding well and should be published before the IOC in 1990.

The announcement that Brian D. Bell had been awarded the Falla Memorial Award for 1987 was received with prolonged and enthusiastic applause.

There had been no nominations for the A.T. Edgar Junior Award and it was announced that Council had decided to expand the scope of the award to include a travel grant. This would enable the recipients of future awards to attend the Annual Conference.

The meeting endorsed a recommendation that a Special General Meeting of the Society be held in Auckland during September, to consider amending the constitution to meet the requirements of the Inland Revenue Department in relation to the charitable status of the Society.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to Kathleen Todd and her committee for their efforts in organising an excellent conference.

The happy hour or so started immediately the AGM ended and this was followed by the Conference dinner. Towards the conclusion of the dinner Dave Ward presented an entertaining talk about the trials and tribulations of radio-tracking Adelie Penguins in Antarctica. Post-dinner activities then continued for a considerable time - I am sure that I heard various seabird calls sometime during the wee small hours.

On Sunday morning we gathered at the fortunately late hour of 9.30 and departed for various destinations - the Ahuriri Estuary, a local game farm, and Havelock North. I joined the latter group and spent an enjoyable, if rather wet, couple of hours peering into flowering gum trees whilst Tuis careered around the canopy. Not ideal conditions to look for colour-banded birds.
PAUL SAGAR

Election of Officers

At the AGM it was announced that D.E. Crockett had been re-elected unopposed as Vice-President of the Society, Sue Triggs had been elected unopposed as Secretary, and Ben D. Bell, B.J. Gill, and J.M. Hawkins had been re-elected unopposed as members of Council. No nomination was received for the remaining vacancy on Council, and so Council co-opted D.J. Onley for another one-year term.

S.J. TRIGGS, *Hon. Secretary*

Changes of RRs

At its May meeting Council confirmed the following new RRs - Martin Day taking over from John Innes in the Volcanic Plateau, Wayne Twydale from Kathleen Todd in Hawkes Bay, Kerry Oates from Russell Thomas in Wellington, and Tennick Dennison assuming the role in Wairarapa. The addresses and phone numbers of all RRs may be found on the inside back cover of *Notornis*.

Council expresses its sincere thanks to John, Kathleen and Russell for their services on the Society's behalf during their time as RR.

Donations to the Society

Council is grateful to the following members who made donations to the Society during the past year: A.V. Brett - \$10.00, M. Graham - \$55.00, C.M. Haslett - \$15.00, P.L. Lo - \$24.00, H.A. Robertson - \$50.00 (to the Edgar Memorial Fund).

W.L. ORMOND, *Hon. Treasurer*

OSNZ Annual Conference & AGM, Auckland, Mau 1989

For those members who like to plan ahead then please note that the next Annual Conference & AGM of the Society will be based at the Whangaparaoa Army Camp, Auckland, during Queens Birthday Weekend (3-5 June 1989). This meeting will mark 50 years since the initial meeting to form the Society, so something special has been promised by the organisers.

New Members

The following new members have joined the Society: Northland - Dale E. Calvert; Auckland - Doreen Taylor, T.F. Murphy, Dr J.L. Craig, Rod Orange, Althea Northey, Barbara Walter, J. McArthur, F.K. Furlong, Shaun Elwood, Anne & John Ellis, Dr C.J. Green; Waikato - Rhys Henderson; Bay of Plenty - G.I. Hunt, Emma Buchanan; Gisborne - Alec Milne; Taranaki - Graham L. Bolton, Wanganui/Manawatu - Daryl Jones; Wairarapa - Rachael A.

Houlbrooke, H.A. Cook; Wellington - Elaine Murphy, Dr. M.J. Williams, K.N. Bailey, E.J. Beatson, M.L. Falconer; Nelson - Carolyn Fry, Amy Kennedy, Z. Williams, S. Williams, K. Quayle; Marlborough - Mr & Mrs M.W. Eagle; West Coast - David Roberts, Kina Scollay; Canterbury - S.P. Elkington; Otago - P.F. Smith, C.L. Darlington; Southland - Peter McClelland.

Overseas - Mark D. Hagen (Canada), W.H. McKen (Canada), Hugh A Buck (Malaysia), Pyong-Oh Won (Korea), Henri Weimerskirch (France), Richard Zotier (France), Ken Ishida (Japan).

Institutions: NZ Department of Conservation Nelson; NZ Department of Conservation, Rotorua; Kyung Hee University, Korea; Zentralbibliothek Zurich, Switzerland.

Beach Patrol Scheme 1987 - Preliminary report

This report concerns the results of cards received to 15 April 1988. In 1987 3611 km were patrolled during 501 patrols. This is 16.3% fewer kilometres than the average of 4314 km patrolled each year from 1975 to 1986. The lower than usual patrolling effort can probably be attributed to the lack of dead birds on the beaches. Only 3903 dead seabirds were found in 1987 at an average rate of 1.14 birds per km covered! The average number of seabirds found per year from 1975 to 1986 was 11 195. Of those districts where greater than 100 km of beach was covered in the year, Wellington West had the highest rate of recovery at 2.01 birds per km and Auckland West the lowest at 0.78.

Unusual finds were a Rockhopper Penguin, a Kermadec Petrel, and a Red-tailed Tropic Bird. There were larger numbers than usual of a few species: 9 Antarctic Petrels, when there are usually only 1 or 2; 22 Black Shags, usually about 15; and 44 Pied Shags, usually about 30.

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

Coast	Birds	km
Auckland East	503	413
Auckland West	1495	1925
Bay of Plenty	206	175
Canterbury North	302	73
Canterbury South	73	34
East Coast NI	175	168
North Coast SI	27	31
Outlying Islands	10	16
Otago	38	61
Southland	23	10
Taranaki	126	126
Wairarapa	6	18
Westland	5	17
Wellington South	125	152
Wellington West	789	393

The success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 1987 was due to the efforts of many members and friends who took part in patrols, and particularly to the dedicated and enthusiastic people who organised regular patrols. My thanks to Mary Powlesland and Chris Petyt for helping to enter the 1987 and 1943-1964 data into the computer during the year (the 1965-1975 data still have to be entered), to the Department of Conservation for the use of computer facilities, and to Ross Pickard for computer assistance.

RALPH POWLESLAND, *Convener*

Report on the Moulting Recording Scheme 1987-88

A feature of the 1987-88 year was that many more moulting cards were distributed than were received, so could I ask those who have records to return them to me as soon as possible please!

During the year stocks of the original OSN card - based on the British Trust for Ornithology design - were almost exhausted so the new design of cards for passerines and non-passerines will be distributed during 1988.

We need more cards from beach patrollers - both of birds in active moult and birds not in moult - so please could local organisers look into the possibility of doing this?

Thanks to all those who continue to support the scheme. I look forward to receiving more contributions over the next year.

BEN BELL, *Convener*

Nest Record Scheme - Report for the year ending 30 April 1988

The computerisation of the Nest Record Scheme has continued well this year thanks to the sterling efforts of Chris Petyt. Chris was able to code and input all the Blackbird and Song Thrush records (over 4000 cards), so that we now have about 25% of all the cards transferred to computer database. I still have to do some tidying of the records before running some of the analysis packages that Christine Reed and Ross Pickard have written. Even though the historical records have now been computerised for Goldfinch, Blackbird, and Song Thrush I must stress that cards for these species are still required.

The shift of the remaining cards and registers from Whangarei to Lower Hutt was completed thanks to the smooth-talking to Air New Zealand by David Crockett, who always brought many free excess kgs of boxes full of cards on each of his visits to Wellington. Chris Petyt and I have made a start on the task of cataloging the 1986-88 cards into the register.

This year I had requests for information on nests of: kiwis, Southern Crested Grebes, Red-tailed Tropic Birds, Bitterns, Red-crowned Parakeets, and House Sparrows.

In 1987-88, 36 members or friends contributed 796 cards covering 59 species. This brings the total to 19 146 cards, and so the 20 000 mark is now achievable this year. The tally was boosted significantly by cards submitted for nests that were the subject of study by present or former university students: 268 Black Swan nests recorded by Teri Meis, 68 Fantail Cards from Mary Powlesland, and 30 Red-crowned Parakeet cards from Terry Greene. Members from the Canterbury region again contributed the bulk of the cards, with excellent contributions from the two 1987 Junior Award winners: Peter Langlands (121 cards of 26 species) and Andrew Crossland (50 cards of 16 species). Don Hadden recorded 78 nests of 25 species, Don Geddes found 46 nests of 29 species, and Paul Sagar 31 nests. Bill Cash (27 cards, including 14 colonial cards) was the only other person to make double figures.

31 colonial cards were included in the 796 noted earlier; these covered 13 species - Gannet, Black Shag, Pied Shag, Canada Goose, Black Swan, Pied Stilt, Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black-billed Gull, Black-fronted Tern, White-fronted Tern, Caspian Tern, and Welcome Swallow.

My thanks to all the contributors to the scheme this year, and special thanks go to Chris Petyt, Ross Pickard, and Ralph Powlesland for their help with the computerisation of the scheme.

List of Contributors: L. Adams, W.F. Cash, S. Chamberlin, A. Crossland, P.D. Cuming, J. Dowding, B. Elliott, J.E.C. Flux, P. Garrett, P. Garside, D.G. Geddes, B.J. Gill, B. Gillies, A. Goodwin, M. & S. Graham, T.C. Greene, D. Hadden, P. Langlands, C.S. Lauder, J.L. Lloyd, J. McCoy, T. Meis, B. North, R.J. Pierce, M.H. & R.G. Powlesland, H.A. Robertson, P.M. Sagar, D.S. Stone, M.J. Taylor, T.J. Taylor, K.V. Todd, O.C. Torr, Z. Williams, E. Woodger.

List of species recorded during 1987-88: Little Blue Penguin 1, Crested Grebe 5, Gannet 2, Black Shag 1, Pied Shag 1, White-faced Heron 1, Royal Spoonbill 1, Mute Swan 1, Black Swan 283, Canada Goose 6, Mallard 8, Grey Teal 1, Scaup 2, Harrier 4, NZ Falcon 2, Californian Quail 1, Pheasant 1, Pukeko 15, SI Pied Oystercatcher 15, Variable Oystercatcher 8, Spur-winged Plover 25, Banded Dotterel 20, Black-fronted Dotterel 1, Wrybill 6, Pied Stilt 53, Southern Skua 11, Black-backed Gull 36, Red-billed Gull 7, Black-billed Gull 6, Black-fronted Tern 6, White-fronted Tern 2, Caspian Tern 1, Feral Pigeon 1, Red-crowned Parakeet 30,

Little Owl 1, Kingfisher 1, Rifleman 4, Skylark 13, Welcome Swallow 19, Pipit 2, Dunnock 2, Fernbird 1, Grey Warbler 1, Fantail 74, Tomtit 6, Song Thrush 23, Blackbird 28, Silveryeye 5, Bellbird 4, Yellowhammer 2, Cirl Bunting 3, Chaffinch 7, Greenfinch 4, Goldfinch 7, Redpoll 8, House Sparrow 3, Starling 9, White-backed Magpie 4, Rook 1.

HUGH ROBERTSON, *Convener*

(Please note that after this report was completed a further batch of cards was received from Canterbury members, these will be included in next year's report. H.A.R.)

Annual Report of the Rare Birds Committee 1987/88

I took over from John Fennell in September 1987. Since then the following submissions have been accepted by the Rare Birds Committee.

Barn Owl - 1 at Hokitika in May 1987 (J.L. Mathieson)

Brown Teal - 1 at Lake Rotorua on 13/3/87 (J.L. Moore).

Greenshank - Campbell Island, January - February 1978 (P.A. Mallinson).

Lesser Knot - Campbell Island, November 1978 to January 1979 (P.A. Mallinson).

Oriental Dotterel - 1 at Greymouth Airport, 24 & 26/10/87 (C.S. Lauder).

Lesser Yellowlegs - 1 at the Mangere Sewage Ponds, 30/10 to 27/11/87 (R.B. Sibson *et al.*).

Great Knot - 1 at the Manawatu Estuary, 27 & 28/12/87 (J.L. & M. Moore).

Common Tern - 1 at Manawatu Estuary, 25/12/87 to 17/1/88 (J.L. & M. Moore).

Arctic Tern - 2 at the Snares, 14-15/11/87 (P.M. Sagar & C.M. Miskelly).

Spine-tailed Swift - 2 sightings, at Greymouth on 20/4/87 and at 12-mile Bluff on 7/5/87 (C.S. Lauder).

M.J. IMBER, *Secretary*

Annual Report of the Field Investigation Officer 1987-88

Overview of the Society's major national schemes

Good progress has been made on the computerisation of the Beach Patrol and Nest Record Schemes, but no progress was made on computerising the Moulting Scheme this year. Chris Petyt, a member formerly from Nelson, was employed on NZ Lottery Board and Projects Assistance Fund grants to code all the Blackbird and Song Thrush nest record cards onto data sheets ready for inputting into the computer, and to enter further Beach Patrol records onto the computer.

Ralph Powlesland, who supervised the work of Christine Reed last year and Chris Petyt this year, has advised that the fund of \$15 000 has been used up. The task of completing the input of the remaining

Beach Patrol cards is of top priority, so that Ralph can write a detailed review article about the Beach Patrol Scheme for the 50th Anniversary publication.

Review of the Society's special national studies

1) Cattle Egret: The annual Cattle Egret survey was again completed in August; Barrie Heather reports that numbers were well up in some regions, but down in others. Unfortunately some regions were not covered in 1987. It appears that very few Cattle Egrets over-summered in NZ, and none bred. Early indications from autumn 1988 are that numbers are well down, perhaps as a consequence of recent heavy rainfalls in northern, central and eastern Australia creating good habitat for the birds compared with an average year. The 1988 national survey will be done in August, preferably in the second half of the month.

2) Banded Dotterel: This study continues to progress very well due to the dynamic leadership of Ray Pierce. Regular newsletters are produced for members of the Banded Dotterel Study Group which up-date results and encourage further efforts. Ray had an extremely successful trip to Tasmania and Victoria, largely funded by a Projects Assistance grant. He saw about 3000 Banded Dotterels, checked 2020, and found 30 with NZ bands, all from the southern-central South Island. This brought the number of Australian records from autumn and early winter to 90. Later records are still awaited. Ray Pierce and Clive Minton (Victoria Wader Study Group) plan to publish their results on trans-Tasman migration of Banded Dotterels in *Notornis*.

Over 500 New Zealand-banded birds were seen within New Zealand last autumn and winter, and a further c500 birds were colour-banded during the 1987/88 summer. Much of the banding effort this season was in Southland, the Lake Ellesmere area, and in the North Island, particularly in the Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay and Volcanic Plateau.

This coming season, Ray hopes that colour-banding coverage will include East Cape, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Rangipo, Manawatu and Marlborough areas, as well as some of those covered already.

Ray has agreed to co-ordinate the Black-fronted Dotterel study that was proposed last year (see *OSNZ news* 44). He has applied for a group colour-banding permit and is currently awaiting a reply from the Banding Office. It is likely that this extra study should get off the ground in spring 1988.

3) Little Shags: This study has been launched successfully, with recording sheets being sent to all RRs earlier this

year. Publicity for the project was also provided in *OSNZ news* 46 (March 1988). Many members have already been involved in special field trips to learn and record the various plumage phases of Little Shags.

4) Migration of passerines: Derek Onley reported a poor response to his request in *OSNZ news* 42 for migration watchers, and this scheme has been republicised in *OSNZ news* 46, hopefully with a better response.

The other half of this study was 'launched' successfully at the Farewell Spit study course, where 160 passerines of 12 species were caught and banded during a two week period over the New Year. In autumn, a major banding effort was made at Jack Taylor's farm near Ward, Marlborough. About 60 members from 5 regions took part in one or more of the 8 weekend workshops that were run by Brian Bell, Ralph Powlesland, Hugh Robertson and Paul Sagar. Over 700 passerines of 15 species were banded, measured and had their moult scored. Plans are underway to set up some banding stations on the Wellington West coast to band more birds and hopefully catch some from the South Island.

5) Red-billed Gulls: Jim Mills reports that there has been an increase in the reporting rate of band combinations this year, and the data are proving to be very valuable. The breeding season this summer was very unusual in that the Red-billed Gulls at the Kaikoura colony, and apparently at other central New Zealand sites, were spectacularly unsuccessful, perhaps as a result of a change in sea-current patterns. Whether this unusual season will effect movement patterns is not yet known.

Register of OSNZ projects

I wrote to all RRs asking for lists of local projects and individual projects. There was a very good response from some regions, but nothing from many regions.

Advice on projects

I have given advice on the 5 projects for which requests were received: Plumage forms of Little Shags - M.J. Taylor; Otago Harbour bird survey - P. Schweigman; Welcome Swallow survey in Otago - P. Schweigman; New Zealand Dotterel study north of Auckland - J. Dowding; Royal Spoonbill colour-banding - J. Hawkins.

New studies

I have received suggestions for 2 new schemes: (1) Regular backyard or very localised bird counts - P. Gaze. (2) Annual cycle of calls/song of New Zealand birds - J.A. Gibb. These proposals will be circulated to RRs and then be discussed at the November Council meeting.

Applications for funds from the Projects Assistance Reserve

Grants approved this year were as follows:

	Grant	Spent
(1) R.J. Pierce - Banded Dotterel research	\$1600	1600
(2) J. Hawkins - Golden Bay wader survey	\$ 315	286
(3) R. Hay & H.A. Robertson - Rarotonga Flycatcher	\$ 500	454
(4) J. Dowding - New Zealand Dotterel research	\$1500	1500
(5) Ben Bell - Sonagram for bird song analysis	\$ 500	0
(6) J. Hawkins & H.A. Robertson - Farewell Spit Course	\$4000	2000
TOTAL	\$8415	5840

HUGH ROBERTSON,
Field Investigations 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: Mike Imber (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 Napier the Vice President, David Crockett, announced that the recipient of the Robert Falla Memorial Award for 1987 was Brian Bell. 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 were unanimous in their decision that Brian Bell meets both of these requirements.

All who have been associated for any length of time with OSNZ will be aware of the enduring contribution made by Brian Bell. A list of members, published in 1956, shows that he was already a life member. In 1954 he had reported in *Notornis* particulars of a flock of Glossy Ibis which spent more than a month near Blenheim. The passing years proved that little missed his eagle eyes.

He joined the Wildlife Service and eventually became Chief Conservation Officer. Not only was he quick to realise the gravity of the threat to numerous endemic species, but he was also aware of the need to assess the zoological value of offshore islands, wetlands and estuarine

habitats. He has investigated scores of islands from the Kermadecs to the subantarctic groups; and if necessary has taken draconian measures against undesirable alien predators. He played a leading part in selecting Red Mercury as a likely second home for Hen Island Saddlebacks. Based on sound field work and meticulous organisation the transfer succeeded. The principle has now been applied to other endangered species and with other islands.

In the Wildlife Service Brian fostered a fine team spirit.

Thanks to his decisive leadership and the skill of his intrepid staff, the last Black Robins were rescued from Little Mangere. The ultimate success of this bold experiment has fired the imagination and given hope to conservationists everywhere.

Brian is a firm believer in co-operation and corporate activities. He played a leading role in organising the first exploratory survey of Farewell Spit. Such studies continue and many young naturalists have reason to be grateful to him for giving them the chance to visit that unique and inaccessible haunt of birds.

As a field naturalist Brian is in the highest class. A tramp with him on an offshore island is also a lesson in the local botany. For many years he has been at the heart of OSNZ and the Wildlife Service, a most fruitful alliance. He knows, as well as any, the problems which beset the study and survival of birds in the many islands which make up New Zealand. He has been a faithful contributor to *Notornis*. He served as President of the Society 1975-1980. He is essentially a man of calculated action; never a mere figurehead.

R.B. SIBSON & J.A.F. JENKINS

Projects Assistance Fund Grants

At its May meeting Council considered 10 requests for assistance from the Projects Assistance Fund and funds were allocated as follows.

Miranda Banders - \$500 to assist the purchase of equipment from which 2 cannon nets can be made. The Miranda Banders have an on-going research programme which has yielded useful results already and promises much more. Their work will be much more effective and successful with additional nets.

Maida Barlow - \$200 to purchase colour bands and other equipment required for a long-term study of Caspian Terns which breed at the Invercargill Estuary.

Sara Brouwer & Auckland region members - \$350 for planned visits to Tiritiri Island during November 1988 and March 1989 to study changes in bird numbers as the island revegetates with the aid of tree planting.

Alan Tennyson - \$200 towards the cost of purchasing equipment required during a study of petrels on Mangere Island, Chatham Islands. This study involves analysis of the calls of petrels, and surveying the nesting distribution of petrels on the island.

Dr R.J. Pierce - \$1000 to cover the cost of banding equipment required for the continuing study of migration patterns of Banded Dotterels, and for the setting up of the Black-fronted Dotterel study (see the report of the Field Investigations Officer elsewhere in this issue for further details of these projects).

Dr Ralph Powlesland - \$2000 for the employment of someone to input data onto computer from Beach Patrol cards submitted during the period 1965 to 1975.

Report on a study of the Rarotonga Flycatcher

Between September 1987 and January 1988 we studied the habitat use and breeding biology of the Rarotongan Flycatcher or kakerori in the southern part of Rarotonga, Cook Islands. In addition, we made an estimate of the population size and mapped the location of breeding pairs.

The following visits were made: Hugh Robertson, 19 September to 8 October; Rod Hay, 24 September to 15 October; Peter Gaze, 22 November to 14 December; Gerald McCormack, January 1988 (11 days).

A total of 37 birds was found in the Totokoitu, Turoa and Avana Valleys. This was the most intensive survey carried out to date and it was pleasing to find a larger population than previously thought (24-28 birds). We found 5 of the 8 birds that Rod Hay had colour-banded in 1984, and we rebanded 2 of these birds, and banded a further 9 birds. The Rarotongan Flycatcher has two distinct colour phases orange and grey. For the first time ever, we colour-banded a sample (4) of orange phase birds and so can now determine if these colour phases are age or genetically related.

We found 7 nests, 6 of which contained either eggs or chicks. Breeding productivity was very low, and we know of only 1 bird which fledged for these nests. It appeared that the main causes of failure were predation by cats and rats.

We are currently preparing a draft management plan for the Cook Islands Government, which will present our findings and outline our recommendations for the management of their endangered species. A formal scientific paper for *Notornis* should be submitted later this year.

The total cost of this study was \$4500, of which \$500 was made available from the OSNZ Projects Assistance Fund.

HUGH ROBERTSON & ROD HAY

Report on the OSNZ Farewell Spit Study Course 1987/1988

Eleven Junior members from 8 regions, 15 Regional Representatives, and 7 Council members attended this special training course for Juniors at Farewell Spit, for the fortnight from 28 December 1987 to 9 January 1988.

We camped at the Farewell Spit lighthouse compound and had the use of one of the Department of Conservation houses as a base for cooking, eating and holding discussion and teaching sessions. The aim of the course was to teach a wide range of techniques in the study of birds, and then put them into practice in the field. Each Junior was assigned one or more projects for which they had to collate the results coming in, report back to the group meeting every day, and write up a report for *OSNZ news*. These reports, plus a general account have already appeared in the March 1988 issue of *OSNZ news*.

The study course was extremely successful, as evidenced by the reports that the Juniors have written. We were blessed by an excellent spell of calm, dry weather which allowed us to carry out a very full programme every day.

Thanks must go to the Department of Conservation for allowing the course to be held on their Nature Reserve, and for assisting with logistics; and to Ecology Division, DSIR, for allowing us to use their 4WD vehicle and for lending us equipment.

We are particularly grateful to have received financial assistance from the New Zealand Lottery Board who granted us \$3400 plus GST from *Lottery Youth* funds to help cover the travel costs of the 11 Junior members. We also received a grant of \$2000 from the OSNZ Projects Assistance Fund to help pay the costs to hire and operate a 4WD vehicle, subsidise the travel costs of other participants.

HUGH ROBERTSON & JENNY HAWKINS, *Organisers*

OSNZ 50th anniversary publication

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Society in 1990 the OSNZ Council has resolved to produce a special commemorative publication. This will be a broad review of the ornithology of New Zealand from the arrival of humans to the present day. It will be a collection of essays and shorter pieces, from many contributors, celebrating the study of birds in New Zealand in a wide and comprehensive manner. This publication will be aimed not just at OSNZ members, but written in a style to enable non-members to understand the attraction of ornithology.

BRIAN GILL, *Co-ordinator*

The Handbook of the Birds of Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica

An exciting project being undertaken by the OSNZ and the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU).

The OSNZ has joined the RAOU in the production of a major ornithological text: the Handbook of the Birds of Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica.

This work will be the most exciting and significant text ever produced on the birds of the southern Australasian region. It will comprise four volumes and volume 1 is already well underway. The text for each species will include a section of field identification, plumage, distribution, movements, habitat, food, social organisation, behaviour, voice and breeding with material on physiology being included in the relevant sections. A fully referenced text, black and white illustrations of behavioural postures and a fine colour plate will be produced for each species. Such a thorough coverage will establish the Handbook as the most comprehensive ornithological text ever produced in Australasia and an essential reference for all people interested in birds.

To achieve these ambitious results the RAOU has assembled a Handbook team. Stephen Marchant, past editor of *The Emu*, heads a 9-person editorial team and Tommy Garnett heads a 4-person illustration team. Jeff Davies, the artist for *Shorebirds in Australia*, has taken on the enormous task of producing the full colour documentation of all the avifauna. A small committee of 4 in Australia will ensure that the organisation for the Handbook proceeds as smoothly as possible. Dr Brian Gill at the Auckland Institute & Museum is in contact with the RAOU on behalf of the OSNZ and is keeping in touch with the numerous NZ scientists contributing to the production of the text. In addition to these people, we have enlisted many of Australasia's leading scientists and overseas specialists whose expertise with particular species is internationally recognised. They will be writing part or all of some texts.

Despite all this the OSNZ and the RAOU NEED YOUR HELP to make this the most comprehensive text possible. Many of our species have very little documented about their feeding behaviour, diet, behaviour at the nest, courtship, social interactions and many other aspects of their life history. So much of this information is stored in field notebooks tucked away on dusty bookshelves and will never be published. Well here is your chance! We are putting out a plea for everyone to write down all those interesting observations and to send them to Peter Higgins at the RAOU headquarters, 21 Gladstone Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria 3039, Australia,

If this can be done your observations will make a very significant contribution to

Australasian ornithology. Remember also that your current observations may never have been actually documented before. It is worth writing them down in as much detail as possible, and if you don't feel they are worthy of publication in a journal then send them on to the RAOU.

Please remember to put your name on all these records because all material will be accredited to you in the publication. Volume 1 will include the ratites, grebes, penguins, tubenosed seabirds, pelicans, boobies, frigatebirds, tropicbirds, cormorants, shags, herons, egrets, bitterns, ibises, spoonbills, ducks, geese, birds of prey, fowl, quail, rails, crakes, cranes and lastly, the bustard. It is information on species in these groups we are requesting first. However, if it seems an appropriate moment to extract all those interesting records for any species, we will be delighted to get them. You may just have to wait a few years longer before seeing them in print.

We look forward to working with you in making this Handbook a truly comprehensive text on the birds of Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica.

PETER HIGGINS

What was that bird?

Bird banding is always interesting but sometimes it pays to question some of the reports you receive. Some unusual reports arising from the recent Juniors course on Farewell Spit will illustrate what I mean.

A dunnock that I had banded 3 years previously was recaptured, but this time as a Silvereye. However, the record for transmutation is held by a Silvereye that turned into a Dunnock then back into a Silvereye, all in the space of 5 days. These records of retraps have prompted me to start a paper on a new concept called transpeciation moulting strategy. At first I thought I was finally onto a refutation of Darwinian theory, but I have decided that it is just a temporary deception engaged in by passerines in impoverished island situations to increase territory size. By pretending to be two species they can take over a much larger slice of the gorse and lupin and guarantee the continuance of their somewhat mixed up genes. I'm really looking forward to getting back to see what happens in the breeding season. On second thoughts I am going to supply spectacles (at a nominal rent) to all would-be bird banders.

DEREK ONLEY

Fluttering Shearwaters on Taranaki Mainland

On 15/11/87 Bill Messenger and Oeter Winter found 2 freshly dead Fluttering Shearwaters at the entrance of a freshly-dug burrow on coastal cliffs near Urenui in the

north Taranaki Bight. Puncture wounds consistent with the killing methods of mustelids were found on the throat and neck of each bird.

One bird was found to be a 395g male in a condition for sperm production. The other bird was a 375g female with some ova of 1 mm diameter. Were this ill-fated duo about to breed?

This site was a muttonbirding ground earlier this century, but previously local birdwatchers knew only of Grey-faced Petrels nesting in this area.

JOHN CLARK



International Ornithological Congress – guides for official tours

Before and after the International Ornithological Congress in 1990 there will be a number of official tours covering most parts of New Zealand. Each tour will require an official guide appointed to it. Should you be interested in putting your name forward for this task, please contact me by 31 July 1988. A brief account of the tours is given in the first IOC circular.

Those wishing to be a guide will be required to have a good knowledge of New Zealand birds and other natural history, a good general knowledge of New Zealand and its geology and history. They will also be required to help prepare the tour booklet for the tour they are selected for. They must be prepared to attend one, and in some instances two, training weekends. Application does not mean selection automatically.

Food and accommodation for each tour guide will be met by the IOC organisation. Some tours will prevent the guide attending the International Council for Bird Preservation's Congress in Hamilton a few days before the IOC. In some instances a guide could take a pre- and post-Congress tour party. Most tours will be 'dry run' before the 1990 events.

All applicants should provide a short statement giving details of themselves and their experiences. Applications should be sent to: Brian D. Bell, IOC Tours Convener, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington.

Requests for information

1. Brown Teal in Northland: A cooperative Brown Teal project, between Ducks Unlimited and the Department of Conservation, is now underway in Northland. This project aims to clarify the

distribution and abundance of the species, basis population ecology, and their current habitat use.

To assist this project I would appreciate receiving copies of any observations of Brown Teal made by members anywhere in Northland over the past 5 years. Information should include, where possible, a map reference, date, and an indication of the number of birds. Notes about the bird's activities would also be useful. These records can be sent to me at the Zoology Department, University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland.
GRANT DUMBELL

2. Cattle Egrets: At their May meeting RRs were enthusiastic that there be another national count of Cattle Egrets this winter. The count is scheduled for the second half of August, but meanwhile members are asked to report any sightings to their RR, or to the national organiser, Barrie Heather, 10 Jocelyn Crescent, Silverstream, North Island.

3. Plumages of Little Shags: By now most regions have introduced this survey through local meetings or newsletters and more than 50 data sheets have been returned via RRs. These contain details of Little Shags from various locations in numbers from 2 to 64. Although too early for national distribution patterns to emerge, it is clear that all plumage categories are being found and that black (sub-adult) birds are often encountered.

JOHN DOWDING & MICHAEL TAYLOR

4. Royal Spoonbills: Already this winter there have been various sightings of Royal Spoonbills around the country e.g., Farewell Spit - 18, Napier - 15, Auckland - 16. With the recent successful colonisation and breeding at sites in Marlborough and Otago it is time to take a closer look at the breeding and distribution of Royal Spoonbills. Numbers are starting to increase (50+ at the Wairau Lagoons, Marlborough) and there is every likelihood that a new colony will form this coming season.

Therefore I would like to know current winter distribution of Royal Spoonbills. The information required if possible is: location, number of birds, date of arrival, date of departure, and any other related information. All observations should be sent to: W.F. Cash, c/o P.O. Box 148, Blenheim.

W.F. CASH

5. Colour-tagged waders: The Australasian Wader Study Group have applied coloured plastic leg flags to migratory waders in Victoria, Australia. Pieces of PVC adhesive tape are stuck to the outside of metal bands and the overlap

of tape forms a flag that stands out from the band. The species, number of birds flagged, and colours used are: Red-necked Stint - 300 red; Curlew Sandpiper - 271 yellow; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - 297 green; Golden Plover - 22 White.

I would be most grateful for any reports of these birds. The AWSG is now trying to develop more permanent flags. Observations should be sent to: Dr K.W. Lowe, Co-ordinator, Australian Bird & Bat Banding Schemes, G.P.O. 8, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601, Australia.

K.W. LOWE

For Sale

All in good condition.

Notornis Vol. 7 No. 6 to Vol. 35 No. 1 (Vol. 8 No. 2 missing) with supplements etc.

OSNZ news No. 1 (January 1977) to No. 46 (March 1988).

EMU Vol. 66 Part 1 to Vol. 73 Part 1 (Vol. 66 Part 2 missing).

RAOU Newsletter No. 2 (Feb. 1970) to No. 75 (March 1988) (Nos 7, 9, 11, 34, 39, 68, 69, & 74 missing).

RAOU Atlas Newsletter No. 1 (March 1977) to No. 16 (Dec. 1980) (No. 5 missing).

Offers to Miss A. Hutson, 90 Korokoro Road, Petone.

Special offer on Cormorant

Cormorant is the journal of the African Seabird Group. It publishes papers dealing with seabirds of the southern hemisphere. All back numbers (Vol 1-14, 1976-1987) are presently available at a price of South African Rands 12.00 per issue. However, a full set of 20 numbers may be obtained on payment of only SAR150.00, including postage.

If not already a member, you may also wish to join the ASG and receive *Cormorant* for 1988. Subscriptions are SAR15.00 for 1988. One volume of *Cormorant*, made up normally of two numbers, is issued per year.

If paying in non SAR currencies, please add the equivalent of SAR10.00 to your payment to cover bank charges.

Write to: J. Cooper, African Seabird Group, c/o Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7700, South Africa.

For Sale

I have several copies of *Subantarctic Campbell Island* by Alfred M. Bailey and J.H. Sorensen for sale at \$30.00 (Hardback) and \$20.00 (soft). Orders to C.J.R. Robertson, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington.

Behaviour of nesting Song Thrush during a thunderstorm

Last summer, my wife and I followed the progress of a Song Thrush which nested in a Kaka Beak bush alongside our lounge window. About 6.00 p.m. on 14/12/87 we had a very heavy thunder shower and when the heavy downpour started the thrush, while sitting on the nest, extended its wings and spread them over the sides of the nest in order to divert the water. This could not have been very comfortable as there was a strong wind blowing and the bush was rocking back and forth, giving both bird and nest a hard time. However, they weathered the storm and seemed none the worse for the ordeal, which lasted about 10 minutes.

GEORGE GRANT

Unusual call by Morepork

At 9.45 p.m. on 8/1/87, I was at the edge of silver beech forest in the Rangleburn district, when I heard an unusual call. This can best be described as, "Haw haw haw haw haw haw", made very loudly, and repeated twice after intervals of about a second. The notes were made almost on a single frequency, rising fractionally during each delivery.

Armed with my torch I went into the bush a short distance, and soon a Morepork swooped silently past me and settled on a low shrub. I approached within 5 metres and identified it clearly. Soon the bird repeated the same call as before and then flew. This time it landed on a pine tree beside the road where I saw it again, and where it repeated the call. After it left this tree I did not hear that call again, although Moreporks were making the familiar "Morepork" call from many directions throughout the night.

MALCOLM FOORD

Seabirds off Banks Peninsula

From 31 August to 2 September 1987 I observed pelagic seabirds from the *Ida Marion*, a deep sea trawler. Trawling occurred from 15 to 30 nautical miles off Banks Peninsula in a line running from southwest to northeast. Sea conditions were relatively calm, although a 20 knot NE wind developed on 1 September. Depths in the area trawled varied from 45 to 60 fathoms.

A total of 7 seabird species was identified, although there were several unconfirmed sightings too. The most notable observation was of a Yellow-nosed Mollymawk.

Cape Pigeons and Salvin's Mollymawks were frequently noted gliding around the boat, as was the occasional large albatross. However, when the nets were hauled in the number of seabirds around

the vessel increased rapidly. With a large amount of offal discharged numerous seabirds scavenged in the boat's wake and this provided an excellent opportunity to observe them at close quarters. Totals reached 5 Wandering Royal Albatrosses, 3 Black-browed Mollymawks, 1 Yellow-nosed Mollymawk, 10 Buller's Mollymawks, 10 Shy Mollymawks 100+ Salvin's Mollymawks, 10 Giant Petrels (some of the northern species), 200+ Cape Pigeons (the northern subspecies predominant), and 3 *Procellaria* petrels.

Several other seabirds tended to avoid the boat and these included the gadfly petrels, prions, and Diving Petrels. No shearwaters were seen, although large numbers follow the vessel in summer.

A few Southern Black-backed Gulls (inefficient scavengers among the albatrosses and mollymawks), Red-billed Gulls, and White-fronted Terns were also noted. In addition, 2 Skylarks were seen flying 27 nautical miles off Banks Peninsula, in a light southeasterly breeze.

Clearly the best way to watch seabirds is from a fishing boat and I recommend that anyone with an interest in seabirds should go out on a deep sea trawler. For me this was one of my most fantastic birdwatching experiences.

PETER LANGLANDS

Birding in Pelorus Sound

Twenty-seven OSNZ members enjoyed a very happy, interesting and exciting 2 days in Pelorus Sound during the weekend of 28-29 November 1987. The expedition, organised by Brian Bell and provisioned by Jenny Hawkins, was undertaken partly as a "test run" for a trip for overseas visitors to the 20th International Ornithological Congress in 1990.

The main body of Wellingtonians (plus a small contingent of Aucklanders) crossed Cook Strait on the Friday evening in *Aratika* and managed to fit in a little birdwatching before dark. Apart from usual gulls and White-fronted Terns, the list included many Fluttering Shearwaters and Fairy Prions, several Sooty Shearwaters, 3 Giant Petrels, a Wandering Albatross, a Gannet, and an Arctic Skua. From Picton we travelled to Havelock by bus for a midnight brew of tea (for some) and a well-earned, though rather short, night's sleep at the Garden Motel.

Seven o'clock on a calm and sunny Saturday morning saw the arrival of the Marlborough and Nelson contingents including Jenny with lots of food for everyone. By nine we were all aboard the launch *Tawhai* (Stewart Guard, Launchmaster) and on our way down the sound with Michael Taylor busy recording the numbers of the different plumage forms of

Little Shags. These, and the odd Black Shag, were the main species at Havelock, but soon we were seeing increasing numbers of Pied Shags. The numbers and variety of birds increased as we proceeded down the sound in a rising breeze and with thickening cloud. Spotted Shags became common and we saw large numbers of Fluttering Shearwaters and White-fronted Terns plus several Gannets and Arctic Skuas. Flesh-footed Shearwaters appeared as we neared the open sea and here we met the first few King Shags.

We reached Chetwode Island shortly after midday and spent some time watching the Spotted Shags (many with well-feathered young) on the Ninepins. After lunch (shared with some Red-billed Gulls and watched by a Little Blue Penguin), 2 parties were landed at different points on the main island for 3 hours of exploration and bird counts (other people caught fish for breakfast). The Chetwode bird lists included, among the more notable species, Robins, Wekas, Yellow-crowned Parakeets (one at a nest), Bellbirds and lots of Tuis. With deteriorating weather, everyone was re-embarked by 5 p.m. and, after leaving the shelter of the island, we crossed a distinctly bumpy patch of sea on our way to Puhenui for the night. Sleeping and ablution facilities interesting; Queen Victoria might have found the toilet facilities a bit matey for mixed company and the occupants of the top bunks required some athletic ability to get in and out of bed. The evening meal, which followed some welcome wines and fruit juices, was equally interesting with curried mussels as an entree followed by sea-food soup, a massive and varied main course and lots of tempting sweets.

Sunday dawned rather wet after an overnight thunderstorm, but a generous breakfast (including fish fried by Jenny) and small patches of lighter sky soon put things right. By 7.30 we had all re-embarked on *Tawhai* and, despite some light rain, on our way to Duffer's Reef where we had good views of nesting King Shags, but did not stay long for fear of causing disturbance.

The next stop was Maud Island where we landed and were soon enjoying the Bucknell's (caretakers) hospitality (especially Jean's delicious scones) and being entertained by a free-ranging Takahe that liked to have the back of its head scratched. With improving weather, we then walked around the island counting Fantails (15 pied and 2 black), Riflemen (a pair using a nest box) and Black-backed Gull nests (2 with a single egg, 5 with 2 eggs, and 4 with 3 eggs). After a generous picnic lunch in the woolshed (including some excellent Maud Island mutton) we rejoined the launch at 1.30 and proceeded to the Waimaru gannetry where, from the comfort of the launch, we were able to

watch and photograph adult and young Gannets (some 75 nests) at close quarters.

There were still lots of Fluttering Shearwaters, shags, White-fronted Terns, and skuas to be seen on the way home but some of us were by then looking somewhat somnolent. Havelock was reached at 5 p.m. and 27 tired but happy ornithologists proceeded on their respective ways home.

Fifty-seven species of birds were recorded during the weekend. Details of species, their numbers, and where they were seen are held by David Butler, Peter Bull and Michael Taylor. The cost of the trip, all inclusive Wellington return, was \$200 per person, and this had proved great value for money. The following members took part:

From Auckland: Peta Sewell and Michael Taylor.

From Wellington: Elsie Gibbons, June Bullock, Raewyn Empson, Audrey Hudson, Mollie Neill, Grace Suckling, Nellie Breukers, Ros and Derek Batcheler, Peter Bull, Allan Munro, John Cockrem, Hugh Robertson, Ross Wilkes, Roger Chorlton, Don Stracey, and Brian Bell.

From Nelson: Jenny Hawkins, Elspeth Waghorn and David Butler.

From Marlborough: Bev and Nelson North, Angela and Stuart Kennington, and Jack Taylor.

BRIAN BELL, PETER BULL & JENNY HAWKINS

Cattle visit Black-fronted Tern colony

While doing bird surveys on the Clarence River, Molesworth Station, I saw a young cattle beast walk through a Black-fronted Tern colony.

I had sat down to write up my notes when I noticed the cattle beast walking towards the colony, which was on a small island. The river channels around the colony were too swift and deep for me to visit the colony, but the cattle beast on getting to the water's edge just waded in and got out on the island.

There were about 20 terns present but I am not sure at what stage nesting was at. Other colonies in the area had eggs and at one colony I observed mating. It did not take long before the terns started harrassing the cattle beast consistently by dive bombing it about the head. Finally it just panicked, threw its head from side to side and changed gear from a typical slow walk to a fast trot. It appears that the terns method of meeting strangers in the colony is effective, although the damage done to any nests might have been greater once the beast panicked.

BILL CASH

Little Grebe near Waiau

On 26/12/87 we saw an Australian Little Grebe on a farm lake at Woodchester, near Waiau, North Canterbury. This lake is about 1 ha and is spring fed. Around Christmas time it always has a large flock of moulting Paradise Shelducks on it, plus smaller numbers of a wide range of other waterfowl.

I was surprised to see what appeared to be a dabchick on the lake, except that the plumage colour was not right. This bird was light grey overall, with a cream spot below the eye just back from the bill, rufous cheeks, darker grey on top of the head, and with a white rump.

The Little Grebe was nervous and secretive and kept darting under cover of overhanging willows in company of some Scaup and Grey Ducks which were also being rather shy. This behaviour is different from that of Dabchicks which in my experience are not so nervous with human company. The centre of the lake was occupied by a large group of Paradise Shelducks which were calling loudly and this was probably upsetting the Little Grebe.

The complete list of waterfowl seen on the lake was: 1 Australian Little Grebe, 12 NZ Scaup, 3 Grey Teal, 3 Grey Ducks, 11 Shovelers, 29 Mallard/hybrids, and 200 + Paradise Shelducks with 2 late ducklings.

On the same farm on 25/12/87 we saw a flock of 280 Black-billed Gulls. They were alternating between a ploughed paddock and the aftermath in a hay paddock which was partly flooded. There were 57 Spur-winged Plovers, 16 Pied Oystercatchers, 8 Pied Stilts, and 1 White-faced Heron also in the vicinity. Feeding conditions seemed good as the paddocks were squelching with water - apparently 20 cm of rain had fallen in November and there had been continuous showers in December.

LINDSAY DAVIES

Sound Guide to New Zealand Birds

I am producing a series of cassettes to contain sound recordings of all bird species on the OSNZ Checklist. The first cassette, covering kiwis to Blue Petrel is now available for \$15.00 (includes postage). Payment should be made with orders to: L.B. McPherson, P.O. Box 21083 Edgware, Christchurch.

Starling hammering snails

On several occasions recently I have watched a Starling, probably the same bird,

breaking snail shells to get the contents. The action is much the same as that of the Song Thrush in holding and hammering the snail on the ground which was tar-sealed footpath, rather than any definite anvil. Is this well-known, or I am perhaps seeing an example of learning behaviour?

MICHAEL TAYLOR

Regional Roundup

Far North/Northland: After Cyclone Bola Alan & Barbara Poulton did a beach patrol on Ocean Beach, along the north side of Whangarei Heads. Their tally was impressive - 132 Little Blue Penguins, 1 Flesh-footed Shearwater, 1 Buller's Shearwater, 2 Gannets, 1 Southern Black-backed Gull, and 1 White-fronted Tern (138 birds) from only 6.5 km of beach. Following this other people patrolled from Marsden Point (south side of Whangarei Heads) to Waipu Cove and their tally was 97 Little Blue Penguins, 1 Buller's Shearwater, 1 Fluttering Shearwater, 1 Gannet, and 1 Red-billed Gull (101 birds) from 22.6 km of beach. The area north of Whangarei Heads always has more wrecked birds than the southern side. (Alastair Gordon)

Auckland: Our March meeting focussed on shorebirds, with excellent slides and a report on cannon-netting by Stephen Davies. In April we enjoyed the National Parks centennial film *The Gift* and heard from Gerald McCormack about birds of the Cook Islands. Gerald has taken the position of Director of Conservation, based at Rarotonga, and would welcome visits from travelling ornithologists with conservation interests at heart. The May subject was the Kakapo, with an attendance of 80 to hear a wonderful talk by Ralph Powlesland.

Tara 49 contained analyses of beach patrol finds, prepared by John Dowding and Nan Rothwell, and tabulated results of wader counts at 18 regional locations, and the spring survey of bush birds in the Waitakere Ranges. Gillian Eller and Bill Lomax wrote up a weekend survey of Ponui Island, which included records of kiwis, Galahs and Spur-winged Plovers, and an entomological find by the RR - an Australian vagrant Meadow Argus butterfly. From Dick Sibson we had an account of early records and nomenclature problems of the Paradise Shelduck, and from Shane Dalton a delightful ode to the Fairy Tern, composed no doubt while spending many hours on guard at the Kaipara nesting ground.

In the field, members joined with Sough Auckland in searches of the Hunua Ranges to locate the small Kokako population, and mounted successful trips

to Tiritiri and Motuora Islands to continue the bird survey programmes. A big flock of Little Black Shags, 175 birds, was seen at Mangere on 8/5 by David Baker and Kay Haslett, and Chris Brown had a distant view of no fewer than 16 Royal Spoonbills on 4/5. However, Cattle Egrets seem to be late and scarce this year. Auckland Song Thrushes began daily singing about 10/5 this year. (Michael Taylor)

Waikato: In April, dinghies were launched to look at some of Waikato's waterbirds at Lake Waahi, west of Huntly. Over 20 species of birds were seen including 2 Dabchicks, 6 Little Black Shags, 2 Bitterns, 20 Shovelers, 20 Grey Teal, 1 Spotless Crake, and a flock of about 400 Canada Geese. The latter were a magnificent sight as they flew overhead.

Spotless Crake have been observed by Folkert Nieuwland on a number of occasions in the Whangamarino Swamp, responding to taped calls and one perched briefly on his gumboot.

Strong westerly winds and cooler weather coincided with a rise in the number of storm-wrecked birds on the west coast. On 15/1 these included a Mottled Petrel, a Salvin's Prion (the first of the southern prions this season), 5 Buller's Shearwaters, 4 Short-tailed Shearwaters, and 1 Diving Petrel. An adult Black-browed Mollmawk, however, appeared to be accidentally beach-wrecked as it was tightly entangled in a length of heavy nylon twine attached to a plastic bottle.

Cattle Egrets are appearing in small numbers over a wide area; 1 on 20/4 at Ohinewai (D. Riddell & A. Plant), 29 on 10/5 at Lake Nganoto (R. Dench), and 5 on 11/5 at Te Anga (J. Robertson). (Stella Rowe)

Manawatu/Wanganui: It has been a good summer at the Manawatu Estuary. Most of the regular wader species were present in good numbers and several rarities were noted. 28/12/87 a Great Knot was seen by Rob & Gillian Guest and J. Moore. A mystery tern was also seen in midsummer, possibly an Arctic or Common Tern, but the identification remains unresolved. Three Red-necked Stints and 3 Little Terns were present all summer. There was also a resident flock of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers which varied from 7 to 12 birds. Golden Plover numbers also varied, with a maximum 32 seen on 3/1/88. Three Turnstones were recorded in early summer.

On 6/12/87, Bob & Sybil Creswell, Lindsay Davies and Rob Guest checked bush reserves in the Turakina Valley in the hope of finding nesting Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. No cockatoos were found in the large bush area of the lower Sutherlands Reserve, but in the upper reserve about a dozen cockatoos were found high up in large podocarps. One pair was seen to separate from the main flock, but no sign of nest or territorial behaviour was noted.

The main flock was very vocal and flew around a lot. Lairds Bush had a few cockatoos (3 heard), but Chamberlains Bush further down the valley had none - until one started calling at the other end of the reserve just as we were leaving! Other species present in the reserves were NZ Pigeons, Grey Warblers, Fantails, Pied Tits, Silvereyes, Tui, and Shining Cuckoo. (Lindsay Davies)

Marlborough: Some sightings this year have been: Wairau Lagoons - 2 Long-billed Curlews, 1 White Heron and about 73 Royal Spoonbills; Wairau River - 2 Black-fronted Dotterels at Wratts Road in March; Gibsons Creek - 1 Marsh Crake; Grovetown - about 10 Cattle Egrets in early May. (Bev North)

Canterbury: There was a good turnout of members for a trip to the Otira Valley in March to look for Rock Wrens. None was seen this year, only Keas, Pipits, and Dunnocks. This may be cause for concern. Hopefully Rock Wrens are not declining as Yellowheads are in the National Park. However, everybody seemed to enjoy their climb in the sun and the abundant grasshoppers kept our attention! (Colin O'Donnell)

The April trip was to the Avon-Heathcote Estuary, where the weather was perfect. The mudflats were dotted with waders, gulls and waterfowl at low tide forming a spectacular sight. Highlights included 9 Pied Shags, 1 White Heron, 18 Royal Spoonbills, 160 Bar-tailed Godwits, good numbers of Black-fronted and Caspian Terns, 160+ grey Teal, 50+ Scaup, and an impressive flock of 1000+ Shovelers. (Peter Langlands)

Recent sightings include 3 Little Terns, 1 White-winged Black Tern and a Terek Sandpiper at Lake Ellesmere; a Marsh Crake at Lake Sarah; about a dozen skuas offshore from Lake Ki-Wainono, and a Nankeen Kestrel at the Riccarton Racecourse (Paul Sagar)

Otago: During the Welcome Swallow survey, Mona Taylor noted the following. "22/2/88 - a big flock. Started arriving 6 p.m. A lot by 6.30 p.m. Huge numbers by 6.30. Sat on two power lines 30 m long and the lines seemed full (400-500?). They were noisy and gone by morning."

During the Banded Dotterel survey on 13/3/88 the Karitane party came across 6 Caspian Terns, 3 of which had metal leg bands. On the same day Derek Onley saw 2 with metal bands and 1 with colour bands, all at Waikawa Harbour.

Jim Wilson came across a male Californian Quail within the residential area at Puketeraki. I saw a group of 19 opposite the Outram Glen on 2/3.

Patricia Wood saw a White-faced Heron on a nest in the grass just north of Cherry Farm on 28/1. This seems rather an unusual place to nest, particularly as they are supposed to nest high in trees.

Ken Gager's observation of 5 breeding Gannets at the Nuggets can be confirmed. Dave York saw 8 adults on 1/1/88, 5 of which were sitting on nests.

The Karitane/Waikouaiti Sewage Pond parties had a bonus while engaged in searching for those elusive colour-banded Banded Dotterels on 13/3. They found 52 Royal Spoonbills at Hawkesbury Lagoon.

Dave York reported 2 Pectoral Sandpipers at the Kaikorai Estuary on 19/3 and Derek Onley saw a Hudsonian Godwit at Cabbage Point, Catlin's Lake. (Peter Schweigman)

A Piopio?

On 15/2/88, Marcelle and I joined a group to canoe the Wanganui River from Whakahoro to Pipiriki, a distance of 87 km. We arrived at Whakahoro at midday, had lunch and then prepared to get our canoes into the water. The river at this point has little bush on our loading side except for the bank, but the other side is densely covered with shrubs and second-growth trees and ferns. The weather was partly cloudy and fine.

Everybody was very busy, when I heard a bird call that was quite unlike any I have ever heard. It was a sharpish call, a little croaky, repeated 4 or 5 times with only a second or two interval between the single notes. I saw the bird making the call, too far away to give an accurate description, but certainly a brown bird, the size of a thrush, perhaps a little longish in the tail. It made the calls as it flew steadily and straight across the river without any dips in its flight. I am certain this bird was neither a Song Thrush nor a Long-tailed Cuckoo, both of which I am familiar with.

In Buller's *Birds of New Zealand* the calls of the Piopio are described as "the ordinary note of the piopio, whence it derives its name, is a short, sharp, whistling cry, quickly repeated". The Piopio has not been observed for many years, despite the fact that it was common before 1900.

One must ask if anything can be done to save the Piopio from definite extinction. There are many unconfirmed reports of it, but my reading suggests that if this bird is present anywhere, it will not survive as predators such as wild cats, rats, stoats, weasels and ferrets spread into remaining forest areas.

One factor that makes it difficult to believe that birds can be reliably reported, is that so very few trampers, canoeists and hunters even know of this bird. I would like to suggest that the Society prepare a simple poster, showing this bird, with a brief statement of its status and the need to have its suspected presence reported. Such posters could be placed in every hut in areas where this bird may be found.

AMYAS RINGER

Lake Grassmere, January-March 1988

During the passerine banding project based at Jack Taylor's farm at Ward, members also took the opportunity to check the birds at nearby Lake Grassmere.

The area covered included the intake, salmon farm and the first of the evaporation ponds i.e. the two larger ponds nearest to the sea; the channels between these and the road and the shoreline of the lake on the coastal side; and birds seen on Marfells Beach and Marfells Beach Pond, which lie to the south of the intake.

No attempt was made to make counts, except in a few cases, as there was not sufficient time to make an accurate census. However, a wide variety of birds was seen, and perhaps the most interesting reports were of 9 Chestnut-breasted Shelducks and 1 Marsh Sandpiper. The following is a list of some of the birds we saw. Figures in brackets indicate the highest totals recorded.

Black Shag, Pied Shag, Little Shag, Spotted Shag (22), White-faced Heron, Black Swan, Canada Goose, Paradise Shelduck, Chestnut-breasted Shelduck (9), Mallard, Grey Teal Shoveler, Harrier, Pied Oystercatcher Variable Oystercatcher (1), Spur-winged Plover, Banded Dotterel, Wrybill (2), Bar-tailed Godwit (34) Marsh Sandpiper (1), Turnstone (300+), Knot (31), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (3), Pectoral Sandpiper (1), Curlew Sandpiper (5), Red-necked Stint (3), Pied Stilt (300), Southern Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Black-fronted Tern, White-fronted Tern, Feral Pigeon, Skylark, Welcome Swallow, Chaffinch, House Sparrow, Starling, White-backed Magpie.

We thank Mr Clive Barker, the manager of the Pacific Salt Salmon Farm, who kindly allowed us access to the salt evaporation ponds.

PASSERINE STUDY GROUP

New Zealand bird flowers

The following is an attempt at listing the New Zealand native flowers which are visited by nectar-feeding native birds, and the birds which have been recorded on them. It has been compiled from a large number of books and articles, supplemented by my own observations. Birds which eat flowers have not been included. Where a report states that a bird appeared to be feeding on a flower, but might not have been, this is indicated by a question mark. Members wishing to plant their garden to attract native birds may find this list particularly useful.

I would be very pleased to learn of further records to add to this list, my address is 145 Chapmen street, Dunedin.

Aleuosmia macrophylla Stitchbird, Bellbird
Aveicennia resinifera Waxeye
Beilschmiedia tarairi Bellbird
Clematis paniculata Tui, Bellbird? Saddleback?
Clianthus puniceus Kaka, Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Cordylone australis Bellbird, Tui
Corynocarpus laevigatus Bellbird, Tui
Cyathodes spp. Stitchbird
Cyathodes fasciculata Bellbird
Cyathodes juniperina Bellbird
Dracophyllum sp. Waxeye
Dracophyllum longifolium Bellbird, Tui
Dysoxylum spectabile Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Elaeocarpus dentatus Bellbird
Entelea arborescens Tui
Fuchsia sp. Kokako?
Fuchsia excorticata Kaka, Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Fuchsia procumbens Waxeye
Hebe sp. Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird
Hoheria angustifolia Waxeye, Bellbird
Hoheria glabrata Bellbird
Homalanthus polyandrus Tui
Ixerba brexioides Tui
Knightsia excelsa Kaka, Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui, Kokako
Leptospermum spp. Bellbird
Leptospermum scoparium Tui
Melicystus ramiflorus Bellbird, Tui
Metrosideros sp. Kakapo, Kokako
Metrosideros albiflora honeyeaters
Metrosideros excelsa Kaka, Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Metrosideros fulgens Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Metrosideros kermadecensis Tui
Metrosideros parkinsonii Bellbird
Metrosideros perforata Stitchbird, Bellbird
Metrosideros robusta Kaka, Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Metrosideros umbellata Kaka, Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Myoporum laetum Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Nestegis spp. Stitchbird, Bellbird
Parsonia heterophylla Bellbird
Peraxilla sp. Kaka, Tui
Peraxilla colensoi Yellowhead?, Waxeye, Bellbird
Phormium cookianum Kea, Rock Wren, Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Phormium tenax Kaka, Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui, Saddleback
Pittosporum crassifolium Kaka, Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Pittosporum eugenioides Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Pittosporum tenuifolium Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Pittosporum umbellatum Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Pseudopanax sp. Kaka
Pseudopanax arboreus Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Pseudopanax colensoi Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Pseudopanax crassifolius Bellbird, Tui
Pseudopanax laetus Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Quintina sp. Tui
Rhabdanthus solandri Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui
Ripogonum scandens Tui
Schefflera digitata Stitchbird, Bellbird
Sophora microphylla Kaka, Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Sophora tetraptera Kaka, Waxeye, Bellbird, Tui
Tecomanthe speciosa Bellbird, Tui
Toronia toru Tui
Vitex lucens Kokako, Kaka, Waxeye, Stitchbird, Bellbird, Tui, Saddleback?
Weinmannia racemosa Bellbird, Tui
Xeronema callistemon Bellbird

ALAN BAKER

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