

OSNZ news

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4,
for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)
Please note that sightings recorded in this Newsletter are subject
to confirmation.

No. 56 September, 1990

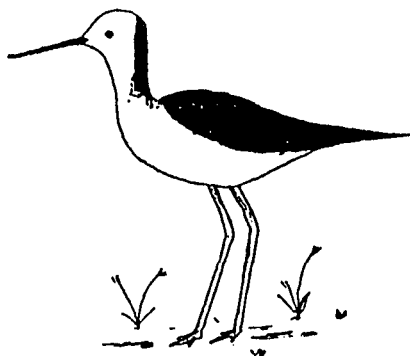
Note Deadline for the December issue will be
20 October.

Stilts on the Move

After looking at thousands of pairs of Pied Stilt legs one begins to get an appreciation for the size of the NZ stilt population. The ratio of banded to unbanded in the north this winter was about 1:600, not exactly cricket! NZ wide, however, 70 or so sightings were made and this gives us an idea of the sort of movements undertaken by the stilts once they have finished breeding.

The obvious trends are of southern birds heading for Northland. The 7 birds seen on the Kaipara or Far North were singles from each of Southland, Central Otago, East Otago, MacKenzie Basin, Mid Canterbury, Wairarapa, and Hawkes Bay. No other winter sightings of Southland-Mid Canterbury birds have been reported. However, some other Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay birds, along with those from other regions, were found to be sedentary. Sedentary birds were found in Canterbury (Avon-Heathcote birds), Wairarapa (several at Lake Wairarapa), Waikanae Estuary, Manawatu (Ohau Estuary), Hawkes Bay (Clive & Tutaeke Rivers), and Wairoa (Wairoa River). All 5 of the Puketutu Island (Auckland) birds were found less than 1 km from their nesting area, but did not join the nearby main roost of stilts at Mangere Sewage Ponds. Waikato birds were short distance movers—a Hamilton bird was found at Tauranga Harbour, while 5 birds from the Whangamarino Swamp (disputed Waikato/Auckland territory!) were found in the Firth of Thames.

Of 42 individual stilts so far sighted, only 7 (17%) were juveniles, whereas juveniles comprised 38% of the numbers banded. The lower recovery rate of juveniles than adults probably reflects a higher mortality rate.



In the case of sedentary birds, there was some evidence of pair bonding through winter. On the Wairoa River, Geoff. Foreman noticed close association of individuals of one pair from the previous nesting season, even when the flock they were in took to the air. Individuals of the same pair were also noted in the same flock in Hawkes Bay and at Auckland.

All up, it is enough to whet the appetite for next season. We have still got a lot of work to do though if we are to meet our objectives next year. We have come some way to answering the question of regional patterns of movement. Over the next few months we should also be able to examine the site fidelity of juveniles and adults, and mate retention.

The other objectives are:

- * To assess whether the pattern of movements is the same for adults and juveniles.
- * To see how individuals move about both within and between seasons.
- * To assess the timing of breeding and post-breeding movements in different parts of the country to see if this varies with latitude, altitude etc.

Obviously these are going to be a bit elusive and our success here depends on

getting a reasonable sample banded again this year, and having a better follow-up next year. There were some pretty big gaps in our coverage this winter e.g. southern Firth of Thames, southern Kaipara.

Already northern birds are tossing nest material around. The persistent rain bodes well for paddock-nesting birds in the short term. Watch out for birds returning to the nesting areas and try to keep tabs on birds already banded. Any new members wanting to assist with this project should contact their RR for further details or write to me at Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 842, Whangarei.

RAY PIERCE

No December Notornis

Please note that there will be no December issue of Notornis this year. Instead, you will receive the OSNZ 50th anniversary publication A Flying Start.

The December OSNZ news will appear as usual.

The September issue of Notornis has been called Parts 3 & 4 to make this change clear; and this issue will be mailed to you during November please do not write in in 1991 to complain that you have not received your December issue of Notornis. There isn't one!

Result of Index contest

The winner at guessing who are the 10 people who have contributed the most articles to Notornis in 50 years is:

**Paddy Latham, Papamoa Beach,
Bay of Plenty**

Paddy scored 9 out of 10, wrongly giving P.C. Bull instead of F.C. Kinsky.

The few entries for the 10 people still living who have contributed the most articles were pretty woeful, and so we have made no award. Here are the right answers (I think): check with the author index when you receive it.

The 10 people (No. articles in brackets)

R.B. Sibson (170), H.R. McKenzie (96), R.H.D. Stidolph (51), C.A. Fleming (49), J.A.F. Jenkins (48), A. Blackburn (44), P. Child (38), J.M. Cunningham (38), A.T. Edgar (36), F.C. Kinsky (33). (Runners-up: E.W. Dawson, R.J. Scarlett, M.F. Soper-all 30.)

The 10 still living

R.B. Sibson (170), J.M. Cunningham (38), F.C. Kinsky (33), E.W. Dawson (30), R.J. Scarlett (30), M.F. Soper (30), E.G. Turbott (29), M.J. Imber (29), B.D. Heather (27), B.D. Bell (26) or P.C. Bull (26). (Runners-up: M.L. Barlow 23, P.M. Sagar (22), F.C. Clunie (21), C.R. Veitch (21).

BARRIE HEATHER

Have you ordered your Checklist yet?

The new, completely revised *Checklist of New Zealand Birds* contains an entry for every species and subspecies of bird – living, extinct, fossil or subfossil-known from New Zealand, the Kermadecs, Chathams, Ross Dependency, and adjacent subantarctic islands. Each entry comprises a partial synonymy, a statement on distribution where relevant, and a list of important recent references.

Publication of the checklist is expected in October/November and members may order copies at the special price of \$25.00 (incl. GST and p & p). Please send orders and payment to: OSNZ Checklist Committee, c/o Auckland Museum, Private Bag, Auckland.



New car stickers available

New OSNZ car stickers are now available from your RR. The attractive

design echoes our special 50th anniversary project (see article by Ray Pierce above) and is printed in 3 colours.

Two types of sticker are available – those that stick on the inside and those on the outside. The latter are obviously also useful for sticking on notebooks, packs etc. At just \$3.00 each they are excellent value.

Science Fair winners

Congratulations to the following for winning the prize for the best bird project at their regional Science Fair. Each will receive an annual subscription to OSNZ for 1991, and receive *OSNZ news* for the rest of 1990.

Anna Bull – Waikato
Becky Brougham – Waikato
Natalie Grant – Wanganui
Mary Bailey-Gibson – Wairarapa
Zak Williams – Nelson
Rachel Palmer – Otago

Not only did Zak and Rachel prepare the best bird project, but they also became the overall winners at their respective Science Fairs and now go on to the national finals.

Thanks Lindsay

Recently, Lindsay Davies stepped down as RR for Manawatu. After 12 years as RR for Manawatu/Horowhenua and, at times, Wanganui, the OSNZ is grateful to Lindsay for all his efforts on the Society's behalf.

The new contact for Manawatu is Sybil Creswell, 98 Manawatu Road, Palmerston North.

Falla Memorial Award & A.T. Edgar Junior Awards – 1990

Nominations are called for the above awards and should be with F. Nieuwland, Convenor OSNZ Awards Subcommittee, 38 Berkley Avenue, Hamilton, by 31 December 1990.

All nominations will be considered by the Awards Subcommittee and its recommendations will be forwarded to Council for consideration at its mid-year meeting in 1991.

A full summary of OSNZ awards procedures will be published in the March 1991 newsletter.

From the President's Desk

At the Special General Meeting, held in Wellington during August, two main resolutions were passed. The first provided for two new classes of membership – one which enables individuals to help the

society financially by becoming Supporting Members and paying at least twice the ordinary subscription, while the other, Corporate Membership, gives firms the opportunity to support the Society and at the same time obtain some promotion in the Society's publications. Corporate Members pay five times the ordinary subscription.

The other resolution related to an increase in subscriptions, to round off the ordinary subscription to \$40 per annum. Council has been reluctant to increase the subscription again, but costs do keep overtaking us. Before complaining too much, just think about what you receive for this and how this compares with other subscriptions you pay. Council has been looking at ways of reducing costs but this is difficult if you want better service.

To reduce costs, the 1991 subscription invoices have been sent out with this issue of *Notornis/OSNZ news*. This saves almost \$500 in postage. If members pay promptly and we do not have to send out repeat notices, this will be a worthwhile economy measure. We have had a change of auditor too, giving up our high-profile firm for a no-less efficient but considerably cheaper alternative.

Council will be spending much of its next meeting looking at the future of the Society and planning its programme for the remainder of the century. Despite what Council does, however, it depends on individual members taking the opportunity to get the best from the Society, by actively taking advantage of what is offered. Think positively about that next field outing and annual conference.

The real key to a more economic approach is a larger membership, as this lowers the per capita cost. We have a new publicity leaflet planned and all members will receive a copy. This is not to be pinned to your wall or dumped in the nearest rubbish bin. Please pass it on to someone who has shown some interest in birds, nature, conservation, or the like. We all need to have a very positive and active approach to membership if we are to get a worthwhile increase.

This will be my last contribution before the international conference to be held in Hamilton and Christchurch during November & December. All I ask is that you give the visiting ornithologists the traditional New Zealand hospitality, so that their stay in this country will be something they remember and treasure. Those among us who have been lucky enough to have travelled overseas know that birdwatchers around the world are exceptionally friendly and helpful. I am sure OSNZ members will be no exception.

BRIAN D. BELL
President

Mystery Photo



This is the first of a new slot in *OSNZ news*, which will hopefully prove both enjoyable and worthwhile. The object of the exercise is simple: in each issue a photograph of a bird will be given, which you will try to identify. The correct identification and features of the species will be given in the following issue. No prizes are involved, other than that of improving your identification skills and knowledge through participation.

If, when you see the photo, you automatically think "What on earth is that?", don't give up or ask someone who you think will know. Try to work it out yourself. There are plenty of good books to help you in this, so have a look at the bird and note what features it shows. Is it a duck or a seabird, a wader or a heron? What is its bill like, its plumage, shape, proportions, leg length, and so on. Make a list of those species which it could be and then try to work out just which one it is. Remember that some species have different plumages for males and females, adults and juveniles, so it may be worthwhile to determine these if it can be done. For some species it may be necessary to determine the age and sex of the bird to identify it correctly.

If, when you see the photo, you automatically think you know what species it is, then ask yourself why it is that species. What features make it that and not a similar one. It might be harder to do this than you imagine.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot work it out, or get it wrong, but treat it as

a learning experience and try again next time. Above all else, enjoy yourself and all the best!

PHIL BATTLEY



National survey of Royal Spoonbills

Most areas were surveyed in June, but one count was made in April and several others in July. A series of counts at the Manawatu Estuary show how important it is to survey the birds in June, preferably over one weekend, because on 24 June there were 35 and on 7 July only 7. Where had the other 28 birds gone - Northland?

Because the survey was carried out over too long a period to come up with a true picture of the total Royal Spoonbill population in New Zealand during the winter, I decided to omit counts made on

extreme dates and to include only those completed during June 1990, with one exception, Wanganui, which was counted on 1 July. On this basis, there were at least 258 Royal Spoonbills in New Zealand during June 1990. These were distributed as follows:

Northland	14
Auckland	26
South Auckland	3
Waikato	3
Bay of Plenty	8
Hawkes Bay	37
Wanganui	5
Manawatu	35
Nelson	77
Marlborough	13
West Coast	2
Canterbury	31
Otago	1
Southland	3
New Zealand total	258

Many thanks to all the observers who checked for spoonbills. We now have a good idea of how many winter in New Zealand - the comparison with the summer count on 6 February 1991 is going to be very interesting.

PETER SCHWEIGMAN

Passerine Banding at Ward - 1990

This year the Central Passerine Study Group made 3 trips to Jack Taylor's farm at Ward to band passerines. Although the first visit, in January, resulted in 196 birds being caught, on the other 2 visits, in March and April, only 29 and 67 birds respectively were caught. The low capture totals were largely due to frequent windy weather and the few birds attracted to the seeding weeds specially left by Jack in part of his crop of peas.

The lack of birds feeding in the crops was overcome during the January trip with the setting up of 5 mist nets in "Plum Valley"; a valley with willows, poplars and several plum trees full of ripe fruit. A variety of species were feeding on the plums, in particular Bellbirds, Blackbirds and Silvereyes, and the strategically placed nets resulted in a steady stream of birds for banding, weighing, measuring and moult recording. Over the 3 visits 292 birds were captured, of which 9 were recaptures. The composition of the catch was 16 Bellbirds, 36 Blackbirds, 47 Chaffinches, 3 Cirl Buntings, 8 Dunnocks, 7 Fantails, 18 Goldfinches, 18 Greenfinches, 4 Grey Warblers, 35 House Sparrows, 20 Redpolls, 52 Silvereyes, 9 Song Thrushes, 6 Starlings, and 13 Yellowhammers. Two of the birds recaptured in April 1990 were of note - one was a female Cirl Bunting banded in January 1989 and the other a Redpoll banded in February 1988. However, probably the most exciting capture was an adult male Cirl Bunting



Wairarapa and Hong Kong members en route to search for Robins and Falcons.
(Photo: Paul Sagar)

during the January trip. Cirl Buntings were often seen and heard during the trips such that regulars to Ward are beginning to recognise the calls of the species. One other species was banded during 1990, a Banded Dotterel chick at Ward Beach.

Other species seen but not captured on Jack's farm were Black-backed Gull, Black-fronted Tern, Black Shag, Brown Creeper, California Quail, Falcon, Harrier, Kingfisher, Paradise Shelduck, Pied Stilt, Rock Pigeon, Rook, Skylark, Spur-winged Plover, Welcome Swallow, White-backed Magpie, and White-faced Heron. Two other activities regularly undertaken by groups visiting Ward are bird counts at Lakes Grassmere and Elterwater. The extensive areas of shallow water at Lake Grassmere attract large numbers of waterfowl and gulls, and some waders. In January the waders were of most interest; one each of Banded Dotterel, Bar-tailed Godwit and Marsh Sandpiper, 20 Pied Stilts, ca200 Turnstones, and 2 Wrybills. By April, only 10 Turnstones remained of the palearctic migrants, but the numbers of Banded Dotterel and Pied Stilt had increased to 55 and ca200 respectively. As well, the numbers of Red-billed Gulls (1000s), Black Swans (170), Grey Teal (100s), Shovelers (100s), and Mallards (100s) had increased markedly since January.

The dense flocks of waterfowl along with a variety of other waterbirds at Lake Elterwater made for spectacular hilltop viewing. During the March and April visits the counts respectively were about 1000 & 2000 Mallards, 3000+ & 2000 Grey Teal, 600 & 2000 Shovelers, 300 & 270 Paradise Shelducks, 20 & 50 Canada Geese, and 10 & 36 Scaup. Of most interest were the Chestnut-breasted Shelducks with 1, 7 & 5 respectively in January, March and April.



Barrie Heather extracting a bird from a Mist-net.
(Photo: Paul Sagar)

During April 2 of these shelducks had the typical white feathering around the eyes and base of the bill, but no cinnamon (male) or chestnut (female) feathering on their breast. Since immature Chestnut-breasted Shelducks have breast colouration similar to that of adults, were these 2 birds the result of a Chestnut-breasted x Paradise Shelduck mating? Many thanks to Jack Taylor for generously making your spare house, the farm, and 'your' birds available to the group for banding weekends.

Any members who are keen to take part in the banding and birdwatching trips to Ward in 1991 should contact Brian Bell, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington.

RALPH POWLES LAND

NZ Dotterel Study Group – Annual Report for 1990

Northern study areas:

The 1989/90 breeding season saw another increase in activity in the group in the North Island. More nests were monitored and protected and more chicks banded than previously. As a result, we now have a good number of banded juveniles wandering the coastline and are already beginning to collect information on how far these birds wander and for how long. In the next year or two we will start to find out whether they return to their natal sites to breed. Those taking part in nest-minding and chick banding were Chris Smuts-Kennedy (Mimiwhangata), Richard Parrish & Tim Shaw (Waipu & Ruakaka), and Phil Thomson & Rick Thorpe (Opoutere).

Work continued in the Omaha-Mangawhai study area. Of the 28 pairs of birds in our central study area, 23 now have one or both birds banded and we are thus collecting a lot of information. A paper on movement patterns and breeding-site fidelity is almost complete and will be submitted shortly to *Notornis*. Those participating at Omaha were Simon Chamberlin, Elaine Murphy, Nan Rothwell, and John Dowding.

National census:

In October 1989 and again in March this year a major combined effort by DoC staff and OSNZ and Forest & Bird members saw the first attempts at a comprehensive survey of numbers and distribution of the NZ Dotterel. This winter I will be analysing the results of these counts and preparing a paper for *Notornis* on the status and distribution of the species.

Stewart Island:

Work continued in the southern study area, with a trip to the Mt Anglem region in November 1989 and 2 trips to Mason Bay – in November 1989 and February 1990. During the last of these trips a large post-breeding flock was located which contained many of our banded birds. This has provided a significant breakthrough in our understanding of the size of the southern population and the movement patterns of the species on the island. Monitoring of the winter flock in Southland was undertaken by Maida Barlow and Bev O'Cain, while field work on Stewart Island was completed by Sandy King, Elaine Murphy, and John Dowding.

Thanks are due to all those named above and also to the many others who contributed sightings and other information. Yet again, I am grateful to the Department of Conservation for logistical support on Stewart Island.

31

JOHN DOWDING

Blue Ducks on the Manganui-a-te-ao River

Mark Simmonds and I have studied a population of Blue Ducks on the Manganui-ate-ao River, in the central North Island, since September 1986. This study looked at numbers, territory limitations, and breeding success. The stretch of river which comprised our study area was covered during a monthly weekend visit. Every pool and riffle was assigned a number (1-41), the river was mapped, and sightings for each visit were coded and plotted on the map.

The results can be summarised as follows:

1986/87 – 3 pairs fledged 2 young and with a non-breeding individual the total population on 31/3/87 was 9 birds.

1987/88 – 3 pairs fledged 4 young and on 31/3/88 the total population was 10 birds.

1988/89 – 3 pairs fledged 0 young and with 2 non-breeding individuals the total population on 31/3/89 was 8 birds.

1989/90 – 3 pairs fledged 1 young and with 2 non-breeding individuals the total population on 31/3/90 was 9 birds.

Mark and I thank the Society for their generous grant from the Projects Assistance Fund, which has financed a further fundraising programme. Funds from this help cover travel, accommodation, and equipment expenses for the study.

KERRY OATES



RAOU Column

Brian Bell nominated for RAOU Fellowship

At the AGM held in Melbourne on 25 May, Brian Bell, President of OSNZ, was nominated for Fellowship to the RAOU in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Australasian ornithology. Brian's achievements are legion, but to outline a few:

* He developed methods of translocating threatened birds to safe offshore islands – saving the Saddleback and Black Robin from extinction, and to the benefit of birds such as Kakapo, Kokako, and Little Spotted Kiwi.

* He expanded knowledge of outlying islands, especially in the subantarctic, and their birds – his knowledge of these islands is unrivaled even today.

* He has published over 50 papers and articles on birds and their conservation.

* Brian was instrumental in gaining appointment of the first conservator on Christmas Island and the subsequent protection of rainforests for Abbot's Booby.

* He has been an international advisor/consultant to ICBP, Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service, IUCN, and was awarded the Queen's Service Medal in 1978 for achievements with endangered bird conservation and island restoration. Brian has served on the OSNZ Council for more than 25 years and, with the help of Archie Blackburn, organised 2 RAOU Congresses in New Zealand.

At the RAOU we feel privileged to award Brian with a Fellowship, both in honour of his outstanding work and as another link between the RAOU and OSNZ.

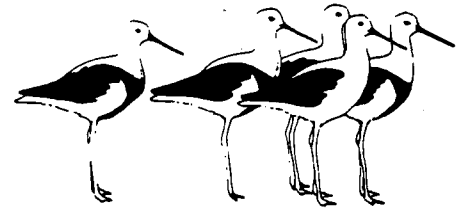
His life-long interest in birds and their conservation has inspired him to teach and encourage people, especially children, to become interested in ornithology. His work with saving endangered birds will serve as an example and inspiration to all in the field.

Broome Bird Observatory Open

In a ceremony on 28 March, complete with a torrential downpour, Australia's 4th bird observatory was officially opened near Broome, in Western Australia. Broome is a tropical port situated near an important wader stopover – hundreds of thousands of migratory waders pass through annually, and the RAOU set up the observatory to monitor their movements. The Australasian Wader Studies Group's 6th banding expedition to the area coincided with the opening, and many thousands of waders were banded prior to their departure for Arctic breeding grounds.

Excellent radar photographs were obtained of departing birds, but the most exciting news was the recovery of a Great Knot in Shanghai, China, 3 days after its likely departure from NW Australia! When the bird was caught and banded on 27 March, it weighed only 202 g, the average weight of departing birds is 220 g, indicating that the bird was not quite ready to leave Australia. Indeed, observations showed that most departures took place on 30-31 March. The Great Knot was recovered on 3 April, which indicates a non-stop flight over the 5500 km journey.

DAVID ANDREW



The Australasian Wader Study Group – a decade of co-ordinated research

The term 'Australasia' may at first seem to be a mere geographic convenience, lumping the continent of Australia and the large islands of New Guinea, Tasmania, and New Zealand with the archipelago of the south-west Pacific. Ornithologists recognise it as a zoogeographical region by the fauna which is endemic to the region. However, it also has importance in the field of wader studies, as a large proportion of the palearctic migrants of the West Pacific/East Asian flyway use the region during the non-breeding season. The Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) is interested in research and information regarding all resident and migrant waders of the region and, by extension, also those of the flyway.

The other great flyways of the world, the East Atlantic and the New World, have received a lot of attention, and the movements and dynamics of their species have become relatively well-known. In contrast to these, the Western Pacific flyway was much less intensively studied until the late 1970s and then only in a fairly haphazard and uncoordinated fashion.

Even within Australia there had been little coordination between the enthusiasts and researchers of the nation's scattered capitals. Fragments of information came to light here and there, although much of the literature of that period is obsessed with recording the occurrence of rare vagrants and with defending the credibility of their observers.

Waders have always attracted the attention of 'twitchers', because of the level of experience and expertise necessary to separate some species. There is also the possibility of seeing a bird far from its usual range. However, more people were beginning to see waders as worthy of much more attention. Studying the commoner species in depth became more important than recording rarities. The need for conservation of feeding and roosting habitats became a matter for concern and, in some places, alarm. It became apparent that some sort of regional coordinating body was necessary to structure existing information and future research.

The origins of the AWSG date from 1980, after a steep increase in wader research in Australia and after the ratification of the agreement between Australia and Japan concerning the protection of migratory birds and their

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1989

GENERAL INCOME	Note	1989	1988
Subscriptions		30,409	29,631
Transfer from Life Subscriptions Reserve		1,271	1,194
Donations		1,934	214
Profit Sale of Greeting Cards		355	423
Sale of back numbers		4,311	553
Profit Sale of Atlases		455	269
Sundry Income		80	1,376
		-----	-----
Total General Income		38,825	33,660
		-----	-----
INVESTMENT AND OTHER INCOME			
Interest earned by all funds		12,535	13,921
Royalties on Field Guide to NZ Birds		4,132	4,885
		-----	-----
		16,667	18,806
		-----	-----
Less: Royalties credited to PAR		4,132	4,985
Interest credited to reserves		9,410	10,854
		-----	-----
		13,542	15,739
		-----	-----
Total investment and other income retained in General Funds		3,125	3,067
		-----	-----
TOTAL INCOME		41,950	36,727
		====	====
COSTS AND EXPENSES			
Printing and distribution of 'Notornis'		28,199	30,878
'OSNZ' News		6,422	5,646
Audit and Accountancy		1,100	1,473
General Expenses		2,873	1,440
Card Storage		481	-
Postages & Tolls		1,630	1,415
Printing and Stationery		1,108	1,550
Regional Representatives Allowance		280	340
Travelling Expenses		1,623	1,198
Depreciation on Computer		752	752
Depreciation on Display		131	-
		-----	-----
TOTAL COSTS AND EXPENSES		44,599	44,692
		-----	-----
Excess of expenditure over income transferred to Accumulated Funds		(2,649)	(7,965)
		-----	-----

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY ARE REPRESENTED BY

NEW ZEALAND	31/12/86	31/12/87	31/12/88	31/12/89
Ordinary	700	690	674	637
Husband and Wife	200	196	186	188
Junior	39	33	45	46
Family	9	9	9	9
New Zealand Institutions	38	38	33	31
OVERSEAS				
Ordinary	66	70	70	67
Institutions	68	75	69	65
Husband and Wife	-	-	4	4
LIFE				
New Zealand	56	52	49	50
Overseas	21	24	23	23
TOTAL	1,197	1,187	1,162	1,120
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Exchanges	50	50	51	54
Complimentary	4	4	4	6

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1989

ASSETS	Note	1989	1988
Current Assets			
Bank of New Zealand Current Account		8,237	6,306
Funds Held		9,820	-
Amounts owing to the Society		10,000	12,250
Short term investments		89,625	86,788
Stock of 'Notornis'	2	100	100
Stock of Greeting Cards	3	6,240	3,481
Stock of Atlases		4,477	4,755
Goods and Services Tax		3,225	2,615
Residents Withholding Tax		194	-
Loan from PAR	6	1,000	-
		-----	-----
		132,918	116,295
		=====	=====
Fixed Assets			
Library - at valuation	2	1,000	1,000
		-----	-----
Computer		3,763	3,763
Less: provision for depreciation		1,880	-1,128
		-----	-----
		1,883	2,635
		-----	-----
Mt Bruce Display		1,311	-
Less: provision dep		-131	-
		-----	-----
		1,180	-
		-----	-----
Total fixed assets		4,063	3,635
		-----	-----
Total Assets		136,981	119,930
		=====	=====
LIABILITIES, RESERVES AND ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Liabilities			
Amounts owed by Society		16,964	11,782
Subscriptions paid in advance		91	2,094
		-----	-----
Total Liabilities		17,055	13,876
		=====	=====
Reserves			
Life Subscriptions	4	11,443	10,909
Robert Falla Memorial Reserve	5	2,377	2,189
Projects Assistance Reserve	6	73,069	64,531
A T Edgar Junior Award Reserve	7	1,520	1,117
Publication Reserve	8	1,528	1,000
Charles Fleming Memorial Reserve	9	3,407	-
		-----	-----
Total Reserves		93,344	79,746
		=====	=====
Accumulated Funds			
Balance at beginning of year		26,308	34,273
Prior year adjustment due to stock revaluation	3	2,923	-
		-----	-----
Less expenditure over income for year		(2,649)	7,965
		-----	-----
		26,582	26,308
		-----	-----
Total liabilities, reserves and accumulated funds		136,981	119,930
		=====	=====

For and on behalf of the Council
 B.D.Bell, President

Brian Bell

AUDITORS' REPORT

The Members
 The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc)

In my opinion the financial statements on pages 4 to 7 fairly represent the financial position of the Society at 31 December 1989 and the results of its activities for the year ended on that date.

Rosalie Chik
 Rosalie Chik
 Wellington
 28 July 1990

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1989

1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

GENERAL ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

The general accounting principles recognised as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of earnings and financial position under the historical cost method of accounting have been adopted by the society.

PARTICULAR ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Particular accounting policies which materially affect the measurement of excess of income over expenditure and financial position have been applied as follow:

A. SUBSCRIPTIONS INCOME

Subscriptions in arrears have not been included in income. Subscriptions in advance have been excluded from income. Life subscriptions received are included in the Life Subscriptions Reserve, from which 10% of the closing balance is annually transferred to current income.

B. ROYALTY INCOME

Royalties on the sale of Field Guide to N.Z. Birds are credited to the Projects Assistance Reserve.

C. INTEREST EARNED

Interest earned by investment of Reserve Funds has been deducted from income and credited to respective reserves at a rate of 11.8%. This rate is calculated by apportioning the total interest received over Reserves and accumulated funds.

D. DEPRECIATION

Depreciation of the computer has been provided for at 20% per annum, straight line. The display at Mt Bruce is depreciated at 10%.

2. STOCK OF 'NOTORNIS' AND LIBRARY

These are included at a nominal value.

3. STOCK OF GREETING CARDS

These are cards printed in 1982 and held for sale in future years. They are recorded at cost. A comprehensive stocktake was undertaken at year end, and it was found that stock had been under valued by \$2923. This has been reflected as a prior year adjustment in accumulated funds.

	1989	1988
Balance at beginning of year	10,909	8,962
Life subscriptions received	518	1,797
Interest earned	1,287	1,344
	-----	-----
	12,714	12,103
	1,271	1,194
	-----	-----
Balance at end of year	11,443	10,909
	===	===

5. ROBERT FALLA MEMORIAL RESERVE

Balance at beginning of year	2,189	1,990
Interest earned	258	299
Donations	30	-
	-----	-----
	2,477	2,289
Less grant	100	100
	-----	-----
Balance at end of year	2,377	2,189
	===	===

6. PROJECTS ASSISTANCE RESERVE

Balance at beginning of year	64,531	60,445
Royalties on Field Guide	4,132	4,885
Interest	7,615	9,067
	-----	-----
	76,278	74,397
Less grants made	4,019	9,866
Plus Farewell Spit grant refunded	810	-
	-----	-----
Balance at end of year	73,069	64,531
	===	===

Loan of \$1000 made from this reserve to K. Oates

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1989

7. A T EDGAR JUNIOR AWARD

Balance at beginning of year	1,117	971
Interest	132	146
Donations	271	-
	-----	-----
	-	1,117
Less Grants	-	-
	-----	-----
Balance at end of year	\$1,520	\$1,117
	===	===

8. PUBLICATION RESERVE

Balance at beginning of year	1,000
Interest	118
Donations checklist	107
Donations Index	303

Balance at end of year	1,528
	===

9. FLEMING MEMORIAL RESERVE

Balance at beginning of year	-
Donations	3,157
Donation: IOC attendance	250

Balance at end of year	3,407
	===

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

REPORT OF THE TREASURER TO MEMBERS

FOR THE YEAR 31 DECEMBER 1989

A better result was achieved than in 1988, mainly because of increases in revenue from donations and sale of back numbers of Notornis.

At the end of the year a number of matters had been left unattended, resulting in \$9820 in unbanked cheques showing in the balance sheet, and \$16,964 in amounts owed by the society.

Grants made during the year ended 31 Dec 1989 were as follows:

<u>Robert Falla Memorial Reserve</u>	
E. G. Turbott	100
<u>Project Assistance Reserve</u>	
K. Oates	350
C. Jowett	200
R. Moorhouse	200
R. Pierce	2019
C. Cassidy	200
A. Cumming	200
D. Crockett	200
R. Maloney	200
S. Stokes	200
B. Heather	250

	4019
<u>Loan from Projects Assistance Reserve</u>	
K. Oates	1000
<u>Amounts Owed by the Society were:</u>	
Te Rau - December Notornis	9563
OSNZ News	1519
Grants Unpaid	1495
Travel Reimbursements Unpaid	564
Expenses not reimbursed	1523
Audit 1988	1500
Audit Accrual 1989	800

	16964

Amount Owed to the Society was:

Advance to I.O.C. to promote New Zealand as a venue for the 1990 International Ornithological Congress 10,000

Brigid Glass
Brigid Glass
Treasurer

habitats. The Groups formal birth was in 1981, under the auspices of the RAOU. It immediately initiated an ambitious programme of counts to establish base-line information for future research. The first wader expeditions to NW Australia were also organised, to examine the hitherto unrecognised importance of the coast between Port Hedland and Broome for palearctic migrants.

The scope of research coordinated and sponsored by the AWSG has grown over the past decade. The flyway includes the rapidly developing nations of south-eastern and eastern Asian where much wader habitat is threatened. Consequently, AWSG's concern now extends to this area and it works closely with the Asian Wetlands Bureau.

The Stilt is the main means of the AWSG for disseminating information and publishing the results of wader studies within Australasia and Asia. It appears twice a year, and some recent examples of the sort of material it contains are:

News regarding two forthcoming training and banding expeditions, in conjunction with the Asian Wetland Bureau and the Asian Wetland Bureau and local authorities, to Java and Vietnam. In West Java the annual harvest of waterbirds is estimated to be 330 000 birds. About 45 000 of these are Oriental Pratincoles and one expedition will focus on the population dynamics of this species. The Red River Delta of Vietnam is South East Asia's first RAMSAR site and is an extremely important staging and wintering area for waterbirds. Vietnamese biologists will be trained in identification and counting techniques, as well as capture and banding methods.

News regarding the Broome Bird Observatory. This has now been officially opened and is running short courses which include studies of the spectacular wader populations at Roebuck Bay. It is the RAOU's first observatory in tropical Australia, and is in a place which is undoubtedly one of the most important in the world for waders, and possibly the best suitable for long-term research.

A study by Marilyn Hewish, based on the Australian summer 1989 Population monitoring Count, which indicates that numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits in eastern Australia may be increasing.

A study by Mark Barter of the morphometrics of the Eastern Curlew. This demonstrates strong sexual dimorphism and indicates that birds of this species do not breed until the end of their 3rd year, a year later than most palearctic wader species.

Information resulting from 5 years of national wader counts in New Zealand, such as that showing different annual

rates of breeding success in Lesser Knots and Turnstones.

A study by K. Sampath & K. Krishnamurthy on the shorebirds of the salt ponds at the Great Vedarranyam Salt Swamp in Tamil Nadu, India, showing how several species of waders interact with, and benefit from, the salt industry.

A study of the dynamics of body composition of overwintering Dunlin near Shanghai, by Shi Ming & Lu Jian-jian, indicating that the severity of the winters causes the weights of the birds to decrease until the mudflats begin to warm in spring.

Banding Roundup, with details of international recoveries of birds banded in the flyway.

Waders have always been birds for the more dedicated birdwatcher, the more poetic naturalist, the more rugged researcher. They are also pre-eminent as a group that requires international cooperation and awareness for their effective conservation. Wader enthusiasts, possibly more than any other ornithological interest group, have to think and act globally as well as locally. The AWSG is well placed to assist in information and research coordination for the West Pacific/East Asian flyway. Membership of the AWSG is essential for those interested in waders in this segment of the world. It includes *The Stilt*, and costs A\$15 for Australasian members, and A\$20 for those further away. Enquiries regarding membership should be directed to the Administrative Secretary, AWSG, 34 Centre Avenue, Vermont, Victoria 3133, Australia.

HUGO PHILLIPPS

Shorebirds Study Manual

Written by John Howes and illustrated by David Bakewell the *Shorebirds Study Manual* is a compendium of techniques which have been developed over 6 years of shorebird research in Asia by the authors and by collaborating experts. The contents of the book are designed to give the novice shorebird researchers a firm grounding in this subject, as well as enabling more experienced workers to increase their expertise. The manual takes a "hands on" approach which emphasises the importance of field study of the living bird and its habitat, and covers the practical aspects and difficulties which may be encountered. Chapters include an overview of shorebird families; topography and plumage; identification; note taking; basic equipment; survey and census methods; using radar; trapping and banding; and feeding ecology studies.

Although the manual is primarily intended for shorebird researchers in Asia, many of the techniques described can be

applied both to the shorebird study elsewhere, and to the study of other wetland birds.

The price of the manual is US\$15.00, plus packing & postage. Send orders with a bank draft to: F. Deen, Asian Wetland Bureau, IPT, University of Malaya, Lembuh Pantai, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Light-mantled Sooty Albatross ashore

Although 182 Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses were found beach-wrecked in New Zealand between 1960 and 1983 (*Notornis* 32: 39), the species is seldom found alive on the mainland.

On 27 May 1990, following a brief period of very strong onshore winds, an adult Light-mantled Sooty Albatross was found exhausted, but otherwise in good condition, in a paddock near Cape Egmont. It was taken to the Pouakai Wildlife Reserve near New Plymouth. There it was much photographed and fed on a diet of squid before being released at sea off New Plymouth a few days later.

A Giant Petrel was also found alive ashore at Mohakatino in North Taranaki on 27 May 1990, but it died a few days later.

Despite some expectations, a beach patrol near Cape Egmont the following weekend did not produce any recently deceased seabirds.



The light-mantled Sooty Albatross which came ashore in Taranaki.

(Photo: David Medway)

Skuas in Nelson Haven

At about 1.00 pm on 6/3/90, when there had been SW winds for several days and the wind was still 15-25 knots, it was interesting to see a mixed flock of seabirds feeding in the flatter water in the lee of Haulshore Island, Nelson Haven. The flock consisted mainly of White-fronted Terns, with Red-billed Gulls, Black-backed Gulls (including some immatures), Pied Shags, Spotted Shags, and a Gannet. The flock had also attracted the attention of at least 8 skuas, with at least 2 of these being light - and 2 dark-phase birds. I

counted 8 skuas on 2 separate occasions, but usually they were too scattered and active to count more than 4.

I watched this activity for about 30 minutes. The skuas were chasing the terns and during that time chases were continually being taken up. These chases lasted 2 to 10 seconds, with up to 3 skuas chasing 1 tern. Unfortunately the chases were too far away for me to record the success rate.

JON R. JACKSON

Kleptoparasitism of Red-billed Gulls

At least 2 Arctic Skuas frequented Nelson Haven from mid-December 1989 to mid-February 1990. Because I was usually watching before or after work, the light conditions and distance at which the birds were seen sometimes precluded the identification of the plumage phases of the birds. However, during the summer I identified birds of all 3 phases (dark, intermediate, light) and observations repeated the pattern observed over the last 4 years.

In the open sea of Tasman Bay, the skuas are usually seen harassing White-fronted Terns, but inside the estuarine Nelson Haven their prey, almost without exception, are Red-billed Gulls on their way to the breeding colony at the southern end of the Boulder Bank. Presumably that means the food that the skuas collect is not necessarily small fish but includes offal. The skuas also wait or rest on the water within 200 m of the gull colony.

JON R. JACKSON

Skuas in April

During Easter (13-16/4/90) JRJ saw at least 3 Arctic Skuas along the coast of the Abel Tasman National Park (the western side of Tasman Bay), including one off Bark Bay. The birds were always in the proximity of White-fronted Terns. Another exciting possibility was a Pomarine Skua off Bark Bay Reef. JRJ saw this at a range of about 100 m, sitting on the water and then flying away. It was definitely a skua, but so large and with prominent yellow marking on the neck that it could have been a Pomarine. Then, a few days later, GQ was at Bark Bay during a bird survey of the Abel Tasman coast. On 18/4 she saw 2 Arctic Skuas chasing terns, and then on 19/4 off Bark Bay Reef saw 10 skuas in a flock of about 1000 White-fronted Terns. These sightings are easily the latest we have recorded skuas in Tasman Bay.

The weather was unseasonably warm (the warmest April in 30 years according to the Meteorological Office), so either the skuas were late in departing or possibly some winter over. The number of skuas

suggests that the warm weather had held them here longer than usual. Another question is whether the congregation of 10 skuas was due to the large flock of terns or some pre-migration concentration.

GAIL QUAYLE &
JON R. JACKSON

Powerline hazard

During the winter months many hundreds of birds, including Canada Geese, Black Swans, Pukekos, waders and gulls, abandon the Avon-Heathcote Estuary in Christchurch and move onto nearby paddocks to feed. Across these paddocks run 2 parallel lines of high tension powerlines which connect with a substation at Bromley. Powerlines are well-known hazards for large birds and in Britain they have been identified as a major cause of death for Mute Swans. Recently, I noticed a number of dead Canada Geese in the grass beneath the powerlines and decided to examine them to determine what kind of toll these powerlines are taking.

In all, I found 14 dead Canada Geese. Most of these were quite fresh and appeared to have struck the lines at about the same time. I also found 2 dead Mallards, a White-faced Heron, a Spur-winged Plover, and 7 Pied Oystercatchers – a total of 25 birds, which is quite surprising as the powerlines only span the paddocks for a few hundred metres. I imagine the birds collided with the lines in poor light conditions because I noticed a flock of oystercatchers, flushed by a Harrier, fly towards the powerlines and then pull up, deliberately avoiding the wires. Clearly then, in good light the birds are aware of the danger. At sunrise and sunset, however, when the sun is low, the lines are probably invisible.

Harriers are certainly not slow in taking advantage of the food supply created by the powerlines. Most of the corpses showed clear evidence that the Harriers had been at work, and the oystercatchers, plover and heron were all picked clean. There were no less than 5 Harriers in the immediate vicinity, no doubt all impatient for me to move on.

ANDREW CROSSLAND

Seasonality of petrels attending a fishing boat

Since July 1989 I have made observations of petrels over a specific fishing ground, situated over a seamount 8 miles off the Kaikoura coast. Counts were made from the *Virgo* at 3-week to 3-month intervals. The *Virgo* offered a favourable opportunity to compare counts of offal-feeding species because:

* The same oceanographically discrete fishing grounds were visited.

* Offal discharge was constant.

* Trawlers were absent from these fishing grounds and only 2-3 smaller fishing boats were using this area at any time.

* Counts were confined to light-moderate swells.

* Petrels could be observed at close range. In total, 23 species of petrels were recorded in the vicinity of the seamount, of which 15 species habitually congregated to feed on fish offal. This simplified the counting procedure and I was able to record the maximum numbers of offal-feeding petrels for each day.

The presence of Wandering and Royal Albatrosses was erratic and they only occurred in small numbers (up to 7 birds of each species). In contrast, 10-30 White-capped Mollmawks were always present. The occurrence of Salvin's Mollmawks was seasonal, with peak numbers (up to 15 birds) during spring & summer, fewer in winter, and none in autumn. Small numbers (1-4) of Black-browed Mollmawks occurred irregularly, although 10 were seen on 26/5/90 after strong south-easterlies. Single Buller's and Yellow-nosed Mollmawks were recorded in late autumn/early winter.

Northern and Southern Giant Petrels were wary around the boat and generally few (1-4) were seen, with no evident pattern of occurrence. One or two Antarctic Fulmars appeared between May and September.

The occurrence of Cape Pigeons was by far the most seasonal of any species, increasing from 5 in January to 200-300 in July, with a rapid decrease through spring/early summer. Westland Black Petrels also showed a strong seasonal pattern, with numbers increasing rapidly from July (3) through September (45) to peak in November (110). Numbers remained low (10) during summer/autumn, but there was another increase in early winter (25-55) followed by a sudden decline in mid-winter. Peak numbers of White-chinned Petrels congregated between November and January, with up to 15 birds present compared with 1-3 during the rest of the year. A solitary Grey Petrel was recorded in mid-winter. The occurrence of Buller's Shearwaters and Flesh-footed Shearwaters was similar, with peak numbers (50) during January, declining towards April. Fluctuating numbers (2-100+) of Sooty Shearwaters occurred between November and June.

Currently, I am continuing this project on a monthly basis for as long as possible to determine more precisely the seasonal pattern of occurrence of all species. I would welcome any comments about this monitoring programme and also any additional seabird records off the NE coast of the South Island (including Cook Strait).

PETER LANGLANDS

Recent Reports

Records for this report were received from more regions than ever before, but there are still a few gaps that would be good to fill in the Bay of Plenty, East Coast, Central North Island, Wellington, and Marlborough.

Records can be sent through your Regional recorder or direct to me at: Titiri Road, R.D., Outram, Otago. Records are needed early for the next issue of *OSNZ news* by **20 October**. Note that some of the following records have yet to be assessed by the Rare Birds Committee.

Seabirds

An odd mixture of subtropical and subantarctic seabirds were found on North Island west coast beaches as far south as Taranaki. Kerguelen Petrels came ashore from late June onwards, with 41 to date in Northland, along with a few Blue Petrels in the Waikato. Northland beaches also produced the second Red-tailed Tropicbird this year and another White Tern on 1 July. A Sooty Tern was found further south at Cape Egmont (Taranaki) on 19 Aug. Several of the Kerguelen Petrels were still alive, as were 2 Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses inland at the Wairarapa, at Tauherenikau on 8 June and Greytown on 13 June. The Greytown bird was later released at Castlepoint and one was subsequently seen at sea off Cape Palliser on 17 & 20 June.

The Waitakere coast (Auckland) Grey-faced Petrel colonies appeared healthy enough in June and 4 Fluttering Shearwaters had returned to the new Urenui (Taranaki) colony by 12 Aug. Shy Mollymawks were the commonest small albatross off the Kaikoura coast and in Cook Strait from mid-June to August, with a maximum of 50+ off the inter-island ferry on 16 June. Salvin's Mollymawks reappeared off Kaikoura on 21 July after an apparent absence in Apr. and June. Westland Black Petrels and Cape Pigeons were present in the Kaikoura and Cook Strait areas throughout the winter, with maxima of 55 and 200+ respectively. More unusual reports from Kaikoura include late season Buller's and Sooty Shearwaters on 26 May and 15 June respectively, a Yellow-nosed Mollymawk on 26 May, a Grey Petrel on 15 June, and 1 or 2 Antarctic Fulmars throughout the winter. A Southern Skua near Wellington Harbour on 12 Aug. was the only skua record I received.

The Gull-billed Tern at the Ahuriri Est. (Hawkes Bay) was present until the end of May, along with a Little Tern which was last seen on 14 May. The Little Terns at the Manawatu Est. stayed until at least 2 June, but the other summer/autumn birds seem to have left.

Few Black-fronted Terns were reported from the Nelson area, with only 5 in Nelson Haven. They were also late

arriving in Hawkes Bay, where there were 49 at Napier by 27 May. 35 were seen at the Turanganui Delta (Wairarapa) on 20 June and they returned to the Tarras, Central Otago, area on 11 Aug. Several of the 48+ Caspian Terns at Taumutu (Canterbury) on 29 July had been banded in 1987/88 at the Invercargill Est. (Southland).

An adult Spotted Shag at Lake Hayes (Canterbury) on 17 Aug. is one of the very few inland records for the species. The Hobson Bay (Auckland) flock of Little Black Shags reached c80 in June & July. There were 49 in May and 38 in July at Buffalo Beach (S. Auckland), 5 at Hamilton Lake on 21 June, and 64+ wintering at the Waimea Est. (Nelson).

Hérons etc

As usual, the largest flock of Cattle Egrets was recorded at Rangiri (Waikato) and, as a bonus, one of the 270 was a tagged bird from Queensland. Large flocks were also reported from Northland and South Auckland, with 70+ at Ruawai, 78 at Unahi, and 60 at Piako and Aka Aka. Flocks of 20 or so were present in Taranaki at Waitara and New Plymouth; in Nelson at Appleby; in Canterbury at Ellesmere and Clandeboye; and in Otago at West Taieri. Numbers were low in Hawkes Bay, where only one overwintered at Fernhill, and in the Wairarapa with only one recorded in May at Greytown.

Apart from the one bird that regularly accompanied the Rangiri Cattle Egrets, Glossy Ibis seem to pop up briefly almost anywhere. 2 were seen at Karamea (West Coast) on 19 June and 1 at Hooper's Inlet (Otago) from 29 July onwards. 2 at Bluff Road (Southland) had attracted 2 more by 10 June, but they disappeared after 12 June.

The Little Egret at East Clive (Hawkes Bay) was last seen on 10 June and 2 were present at Wattle Down Ponds (Auckland) on 2 Aug. In Canterbury, one was at the Ashley Est. throughout the winter and another was at L. Forsyth in July. 3 Bitterns were reported from Raglan Harbour (Waikato) in early Aug. and in the same month in Otago at the Kaikorai Est. and Silverstream. A flock of 83 White-faced Herons in one paddock at Greytown (Wairarapa) shows how common these birds have become.

Reef Herons were seen at the southern edge of their range – in the Wairarapa at Mataikona in June-July and Riversdale Beach on 31 May; in Otago, at Aramoana with 2 from 17 July to late Aug. and one near Brighton on 1 July; in Southland at Omani on 28 July and in Fiordland at Martin's Bay on 24 May.

Waterbirds

A Crested Grebe at Anderson's Lagoon on 17 July was a rare record for coastal Otago. Dabchicks continue to do well in

Hawkes Bay, with flocks of 55 at Lake Hatuma in July and c26 at Hurimoana Swamp on 22 July.

Black Swans increased to 167 by 2 June at Masterton S.P. (Wairarapa) and a large flock of c1100 was counted at L. Runanga (Hawkes Bay) on 15 July. Horseshoe Lake, also in Hawkes Bay, was a new locality for Canada Geese and numbers reached c700 at L. Waahi (Waikato) on 14 July.

Large numbers of Grey Teal were reported from Waituna Lagoon (Southland), with 400+ on 22 May; Cooper's Lagoon (Canterbury), with 305 on 29 July; and Mangere S.P. (Auckland), with 550 on 24 June – along with 450 Shovelers. Both these species have increased at the latter site over the last few years. And also at Mangere on 24 June was a Pink-eared Duck, the first record for New Zealand, a belated consequence perhaps of a wet Australian desert?

Coots at Hamilton Lake increased from 33 on 3 June to 78 on 15 Aug., but this is still well below the 180 recorded in Apr. 1988.

Birds of Prey

One of the reasons for starting Recent Reports was to alert observers to any "ornithological events", so that they could keep an eye on further developments. West Coast records of Nankeen Kestrels in the last report suggested a small influx and winter records have confirmed that this is the case. 7-8 birds have been seen regularly between Hokitika and Westport on the West Coast, 1 or 2 were present at Cape Maria Van Dieman (Northland), 1 at Whitehall (Waikato) in May, a male at Rangiwhaia (Manawatu) from 3-10 June, and an unfortunate bird at Korere (Nelson) was eventually run over on the road. A bird at Te Mata Peak (Hawkes Bay) may well have been the same one that has been there for several years, although one nearby at Fernhill on 16 July was possibly another bird. The last significant influx of this species in 1969 coincided with the colonisation of Norfolk Island - maybe they will breed in New Zealand this year?

Also unusual was a Barn Owl found dead at New Plymouth on 16 Aug.

Recent Auckland and Christchurch records have raised the possibility that Barn Owls have a liking for aircraft and airports (modern barns?) and hitch lifts across the Tasman. This New Plymouth record suggests they can make it here on their own. Widespread records of NZ Falcons continue to suggest that they are regular in suburbs and agricultural areas in winter. Birds were seen in Twyford/Fernhill (Hawkes Bay); in the Wairarapa at Greytown and Carterton on 16 July; in New Plymouth on 7 July; and in Otago in Dunedin on 12 May and Late Aug., Evansdale on 4 June, and East Taieri on 14 Aug.

Waders

A few more of the unusual northern hemisphere waders stayed on well into our winter. A tattler was seen at Cow Island (Southland) on 7 July and the Siberian species was identified at the Manawatu Est. in June and Aramoana (Otago) in July. Also at Aramoana from 3 June onwards was a Mongolian Dotterel in non-breeding plumage. Three Asiatic Whimbrels remained at Whangarei Harbour (Northland) and the American subspecies was seen at Piako in June and Manukau (Auckland) in July. Far Eastern Curlews were present at Manukau in June, Miranda in Aug., Manawatu Est. at least until 4 Aug., and at Waimea Est. (Nelson) in early Aug. A Hudsonian Godwit wintered at Rangaura Harbour and also in Northland, at Whangarei, were 2 Golden Plovers, one of which assumed breeding plumage and could safely be identified as the Pacific species. Low numbers of Turnstones were reported from the Nelson area with only 2 at Farewell Spit.

In contrast, 64 Variable Oystercatchers, including 8 pied birds wintered at Nelson Haven. Southland observers had to wait longer than usual for the Cow Island flock of NZ Dotterels to arrive and build up to a maximum of 24. Good numbers of Black-fronted Dotterels were reported from Hawkes Bay with c40 at Wanstead Lagoon on 17 June, and a few more than usual were seen in coastal Otago, with 2-3 at the Kaikourai Est. from June to Aug., at Hawkesbury Lagoon in July, and at Outram and the Henley Ferry on the lower Taieri in Aug.

In Northland, a huge flock of c1600 Banded Dotterels wintered at Parengarenga, while those at Onerahi Airport decreased from 273 in late July to 60 by 15 Aug. as birds dispersed to breeding sites. Pied Stilts returned to coastal Otago breeding sites (possibly from Northland!) in the first week of Aug. and reached Tarras, Central Otago, by 14 Aug. – although there were still c1500 in Hawkes Bay at Poukawa.

Spur-winged Plovers continue to increase in the North Island with 9 at Waiatarua, 1 at Otahuhu, and 2 at Henderson in the Auckland area during June. 69 at Waitara on 1 July was the highest Taranaki count to date and flocks of 40-50 were regularly seen in the Napier, Hastings, and Palmerston North areas. The first chicks were seen in Southland at Lothiel on 20 July and 3-week old chicks were running around in Otago by 3 Aug.

... and the rest

Four Wekas were heard/seen in the Holyoake Stream area, near Motueka (Nelson), on 28 Aug. Marsh Crakes were present at L. Oinga (Hawkes Bay) on 5 Aug. and Spotless Crakes at Waihou (Waikato) on 2 June.

There were the usual winter sightings of wandering Kakas in Northland with a max. of 7 around Parua Bay. Elsewhere in the North Island there were 2 pairs near Coromandel in June, 2 at Papakura (Auckland), 8 at Tahuna (Waikato) on 2 Aug., 1 at Hillcrest (also Waikato) about 8 Aug., and 1 at Mangamingi (Taranaki) on 18 Aug. Kakas were present in more acceptable habitat in the Waiohine River (Taranaki) in Apr., along with 10 Yellow-crowned Parakeets. However, a Kea near the entrance to the tourist cave on Takaka Hill (Nelson) on 28 Aug. was a bit unusual. 5-6 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in suburban Havelock North for the last 2 1/2 years may be the basis of recent reports in the area. Up to 6 have also been reported from the Port Levy area of Banks Peninsula (Canterbury).

A pair of Red-vented Bulbuls at Mt Eden (Auckland) on 29 June raised a few questions, as the local population was declared an undesirable introduction and apparently exterminated in 1955! A "major new population" of 15 Kokako has been located at Waipoua Forest (Northland) and a remnant population of Fernbirds hangs on in the upper Waihopai River area, near Edendale (Southland).

Wintering flocks of passerines included 52 Skylarks at Tiwai Road (Southland) on 28 June and c150 Chaffinches, all males, at Atawhai (Nelson). There are signs of spring though. The first Blackbird song was heard in Auckland on 22 June, and much later (and very briefly) at Tarras, Central Otago, on 8 July.

Chaffinches began singing in Auckland a few weeks later, on 27 July.

Compiled by DEREK ONLEY

Regional Roundup

Auckland: Recent meetings have carried our thoughts far and wide. In June, Tim Lovegrove gave a fascinating account of his study of the transfer of Saddlebacks to Kapiti Island. Then in July, Stephen Davies took us through some fine bird habitats of North America, following his visits during a recent sabbatical leave. Finally, in August Kerry Rodgers described opportunities to identify birds of Pacific Islands that have come his way during field work as a geologist.

Enthusiasm for local field work may have been dampened by the weather, but there was a good turnout to survey the Kaipara Lakes in May and the usual winter shorebird surveys of the Manukau and Tamaki Estuaries were accomplished. Banding studies of Grey-faced Petrels have continued on the Waitakere coast and have also been attempted at some of the islands in the Hauraki Gulf. Following a survey of Tiritiri Island in autumn, some members

have also visited the sanctuary to continue tree-planting and to witness further releases of Whiteheads. (Michael Taylor)

South Auckland: In June, Ian McFadden presented a very interesting talk about an experiment which aims to return a breeding population of Black Petrels to Little Barrier Island; only about 20 pairs currently breed on the island. Chicks which are near to fledging on Great Barrier Island are placed in specially prepared burrows on Little Barrier, and fed until they fledge. In 1991, when the oldest of these birds will be 5-years old, both islands will be closely watched for the return of any banded birds.

In July, Paul Harrison showed beautiful slides of the birds around Cairns, and included some of a trip to Green Island and Michaelmas Cay.

In August we entertained ourselves with members' mystery photos and Pam Agnew prepared a quiz of 10 bird calls, which were played in rapid succession. An added bonus was the return of Scott & Viv Rutherford from a 10-day cruise aboard the *Acheron* from Preservation Inlet to Doubtful Sound. Blessed with some remarkable fine weather, they shared with us this wonderful experience and their fine photos. However, we were saddened to hear that even this area has a litter problem, mainly caused by the crayfishing boats.

Winter counts occupied us during May and June. At Thames, the team's biggest trouble was to count the large numbers of birds on the seaward side of "Pack & Save's" roof, a favoured roost these days. We continued to check Pied Stilts, particularly on the Manukau Harbour, but nothing has turned up since the bird from Mid Canterbury was seen at Karaka by Christine Reed. In July we had a look at Glenbrook Beach, but only turned up several hybrids. Pam Agnew reports that 3 colour-banded birds have returned to Kopuku, but at present the paddocks are flooded. At Miranda, the first pair of Pied Stilts has visited newly formed "Widgery Lake", in front of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust building. (Anthea Goodwin)

Waikato: In June, Ewen Cameron illustrated the great diversity of birds on the Indian subcontinent with a selection of excellent slides taken at the important sanctuary of Bharatpur (near Agra) and in the wildlife parks of Assam. The RR spoke in July, about a recent trip she made to the subantarctic Auckland and Campbell Islands in the topsail schooner *Tradewind*. Each hour 10-minute counts of seabirds were made while at sea.

At our August meeting, Folkert Nieuwland gave an interesting account of the DoC ecological survey of the Whangamarino, the largest wetland in New Zealand. Folkert's task was to study the birdlife of the area.

The winter shorebird census of Kawhia and Aotea Harbours was successfully completed, with particular attention paid to the 16 Black/hybrid Stilts present. Extensive checks of Pied Stilts were carried out on Kawhia, but no banded birds were found. Cattle Egret numbers are up on 1989 figures in the region. Amongst the 270 at Rangiriri on 26/6, it was exciting at long long to find a wing-tagged bird and even to get to read the number! It proved to be a bird tagged as a chick at Ballina, on the Queensland coast, on 14/12/89.

Becky Broughan and Anna Bull are joint recipients of the special award for the best bird project at the 1990 Waikato Science Fair. Beach patrolling was most rewarding during July and August, with over 100 birds of 18 species found, including Blue and Kerguelen Petrels. 5 species of prions accounted for over half the total. On Ruapuke Beach, beer cans were also found - full (2 species). (Stella Rowe)

Wairarapa: On the evening of 19/5 we held a combined meeting with members from the Forest & Bird Society and Ducks Unlimited. Kerry Muller, manager of Wellington Zoo, spoke about waterfowl and their habitats. His address was very informative, well illustrated and enjoyed by the 50+ present.

On 13/6, Martin Bell conducted an evening session about getting to know your bush birds, using bird calls and bird silhouettes.

This proved a popular and interesting way of teaching people about bird recognition in the bush.

The weekend of 23-24/6 was an active one. A mist netting session at Tae's Orchard, Greytown, banded 115 birds - predominately Silvereyes, but Chaffinches, Goldfinches, Greenfinches, Blackbirds, House Sparrows, Starlings, and a solitary Redpoll were also captured. It was a beautiful warm calm day and at various times 39 people attended, including 5 who came down from Hawke's Bay with Christine McRae.

The following day saw 14 members (including the Hawke's Bay contingent) on the shores of Lake Wairarapa for the winter wader count. We were very lucky with the weather as it was sunny and calm all day. A total of 1894 birds were counted, including 1034 Pied Stilts, 454 Banded Dotterels, 117 Spur-winged Plovers, and 108 Black-fronted Dotterels. We very much enjoyed sharing the weekend with the Hawke's Bay members and hope we may be able to return a visit to them next year. (Tenick Dennison)

Manawatu: A bird banding weekend at Pukepuke Lagoon on 13-15/7 was disappointing because the weather was too fine! There was little feed and the birds flew high. However, a previously banded Dunnock was recaptured, a Bittern was seen, and Fernbirds and crakes were heard.

Hugh Robertson is discussing a possible project at the Ohau Estuary - measuring changes in birdlife as the rivermouth shifts southwards and the area of the estuary increases. (Sybil Creswell)

Nelson: At the recent Nelson Sciences Fair, Zak Williams won the prize for the best bird exhibit and the prize for the best exhibit overall (out of 250 exhibits). This means Zak now qualifies for the National Science Fair in Palmerston North, during September this year. His entry 'Survival factors for Blackbird and Song Thrush nests' was assembled following 3 years study near his home.

Henk Heinekamp, assisted by Willie Cook and Gail Quayle, mounted a display for the Leisure Expo which was held in Nelson 11-12 August. They were helped in manning the stand by Peter Gaze, Jon Jackson, Kelly & Tessa Quayle, and Jenny Hawkins. More than 4000 people visited the expo and all the pamphlets disappeared, but so far no new members.

A small party led by Gail Quayle went looking for Cirl Buntings on the Wakapuaka sandflats during August. They found 13 birds in 3 small groups. These flocks do not seem to have altered in numbers over the past few years. (Jenny Hawkins)

Otago: Since the NZ Kingfisher project had a follow-up in the daily papers, including a small advertisement, our coordinator, Lesley Gowans, has been very busy keeping up with the demand for survey sheets. In consultation with Southland members, it has been decided to extend this project until the end of February 1991 in the hope that a better picture develops over the summer. Last summer very few sightings were reported. Visitors to Southland and Otago are urged to make a special effort and report any Kingfishers seen during your travels.

The Kaikorai Estuary has now been surveyed for over a year. During this period a total of 48 species has been recorded, although not all in large numbers. The Black-backed Gull was the most numerous, with an average of 3440 out of an average total of all birds of 6025. The average for all waterfowl was 1136; with the duck shooting season a major hiccup in the tally - the extremes for Mallard were 1206 in March 1990 and only 1 in June 1990, Grey Teal 668 and 0, Shoveler 138 and 0, and Black Swan 523 and 322. Pied Stilts outnumbered Spur-winged Plovers, averaging 170 and 70 respectively.

Since the estuary was blocked during 6 counts, due to high winds, this survey is to continue for another year to see if the higher water levels have a bearing on the total bird population.

Next month we hope to erect an observation hide to view Yellow-eyed Penguins in comfort and at the same time

keep well-meaning people away from nesting sites.
(Peter Schweigman)

Southland: The region's annual meeting was attended by 19 members at the Sutton's home on 28 July. The RR reported that membership for the region was 35. There had been 5 meetings, with an average attendance of 17. The 3 organised field trips attracted an average of 16 members; 2 field days were canceled because of the weather. Other activities included a watch of migratory waders (8 people, 28 trips); Oreti River survey (5 people walked 70 km of the river and 3 other people helped with driving); Caspian Tern & NZ Dotterel studies continued. The Otago/Southland Kingfisher project was well supported. Several members contributed to national projects of beach patrols, Cattle Egret census, Pied Stilt & Black-fronted Dotterel studies.

The region had continued to provide a forum and field opportunities for those who wish to study birds, whether informally or more intensively, and to meet like-minded people. Experienced older members were still the core, but several able younger people were new contributing strongly. Finances were very sound, thanks to substantial donations from members. Both the RR and Treasurer (Michael Criglington) were reappointed, however, the RR gave notice that she wished to be relieved of the position in 1991.

Reporting on the Kingfisher project, Peter Muller said that he & Wilma had received nearly 400 sightings from 75 different observers, with many survey sheets still to come in. A newspaper advertisement, which ran for 2 Saturdays, produced more than 50 replies from people not previously heard from.

The evening concluded with an enjoyable talk by Peter McClelland about the fauna of the Chathams, supported by many fine slides. (Maida Barlow).

Birds of New Zealand Locality Guide

This book by Stuart Chambers is now available at the reduced price of \$44.00.

A donation from each sale to a member goes to OSNZ. Therefore please state on your cheque that OSNZ was the source of your order.

Send orders to: Arun Books, 649 River Road, Hamilton.

Deadline for the next issue is
20 October