

# 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. 61 December, 1991

Note Deadline for the March issue will be 20th  
February.

## National Wader Count Update

Since they began in November 1983, the Society's National Wader Counts have produced some valuable and interesting results. For migratory waders the counts have produced:

- ★ reliable estimates of the total numbers in New Zealand;
- ★ indications of year-to-year variations in the numbers of these waders;
- ★ indices of their breeding success during the previous northern summer (this assumes that most of the birds counted in June are the young of the previous breeding season); and
- ★ a better understanding of their distribution within the country.

In addition, we have some valuable information about our own waders, including:

- ★ minimum population estimates for Wrybill, Pied Oystercatcher, and Pied Stilt;
- ★ an indication of the proportion of the Banded Dotterel population which remains in the country during winter; and
- ★ an understanding of the distribution of all species during the winter.

As well, all counts are a great source of information for species accounts in volumes 2 & 3 of the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*, currently being prepared.

Preliminary reports of the counts from November 1983 to June 1989 have appeared in *OSNZ news* and a more detailed analysis of the results for these years is being prepared for *Notornis*. The value of the results is recognised by some outside agencies and they have been used to support applications for conservation and management purposes within New Zealand.

The importance of our National Wader Counts has also received international recognition. New Zealand lies at the southern end of the South East Asian Flyway for migratory waders which arrive here via Asia and Australia. Consequently, our results have been used by the Australasian Wader Study Group and the Asian Wetland Bureau, and shortly will also be reported by the International Waterfowl Research Bureau (based at Slimbridge, UK). In addition, trends in our counts of species such as Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots and Turnstones have been compared with counts of these species in Australia. All this helps us gain a better understanding of migratory waders across their entire geographical range, not just what is happening in our isolated segment of their range.

### What next?

Our immediate concern is that we continue the National Wader Counts at their present level. Every series of counts we complete adds more value to the project. As an example of the value of a long series of counts we need only refer to the 30 or so years of information available from the summer and winter counts made at the Firth of Thames and Manukau Harbour.

No doubt the analysis of counts made from 1983 to 1989 will show some fruitful areas of new research. Meanwhile, it is important to continue the extensive coverage of the National Wader Counts. Every member is able to assist with this important project – by providing essential transport or as an experienced wader watcher. Contact your Regional Representative now and register your interest as a participant in the June National Wader Count.

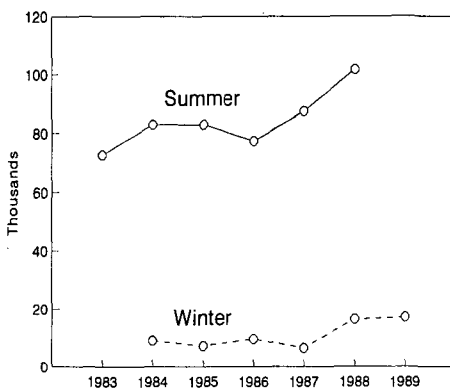
PAUL SAGAR  
Coordinator, National Wader Counts

### From the President's Desk

The year nears its end and time has come for New Year resolutions, but more about them later.

The nesting season is nearly over and I hope that everyone has completed some nest record cards and will send them to the Nest Record Scheme organiser. Now we need to consider what our next private or collective studies might be.

Many of us will be going off on holiday, some to the beach, some to the mountains and other's moving about the country. All these activities provide an opportunity to see birds in new localities, and in some cases an opportunity to see



Numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits counted in New Zealand during summer & winter 1983-1989

special species. While these occasions will be mainly for our own pleasure and enjoyment, we should also remember that the records are important and should be recorded for Classified Summarised Notes. In some cases they could even warrant a Short Note in *Notornis*.

We can also turn our attention to some of the Society's and members' collective schemes, particularly the colour banding projects. Considerable effort has been made by many members throughout New Zealand to band Pied Stilts and Black-fronted Dotterels, and by small groups or individuals working on NZ Dotterels, Pied Oystercatchers, Caspian Terns and Royal Spoonbills. Though colour banding makes the study of individual birds more meaningful for the researchers, valuable results also come from the collective observations of all observers. Late summer and autumn is a good time to check post-breeding flocks. Any records of colour banded birds will build up to a significant body of information which will unravel the dispersal patterns of the species involved. From a purely selfish approach, it makes watching birds much more interesting and enjoyable. A good number of members took advantage of the Society's opportunity to buy telescopes at discount prices, so the addition of these to the arsenal of optical equipment should ensure an increase in the number of colour banded birds reported.

Well, what about those New Year resolutions? If our Society and bird study mean something worthwhile for us then perhaps it is time to give something back. It is well to remember that whatever you put into an organisation, you will get more back. The most effective result comes from taking a more active involvement in projects, field outings and study courses. These will add to your skills, take you to exciting places, and introduce you to other people with similar interests.

Bird study is an active interest for most (but let's not forget those who are passively involved and help through their financial support of the Society), however, this needs to be organised and directed towards specific objectives. The first essential is to record your observations and then select some aspect which you would like to follow through. The aspect selected can vary from watching and recording the species and numbers of birds visiting your garden throughout the year to climbing along mountain streams to record the productivity of Blue Ducks. The scope is endless and this is one of the fascinations of bird study - there is always something new to be learnt.

Finally, let me suggest that you introduce a friend or acquaintance to the Society, so that they can also share the pleasures of bird study. The Society's membership is now showing a steady growth, but I continue to find people with an interest in birds who have not yet heard

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

## NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the following five Council members retire in May 1992 and nominations are hereby called for, to fill the vacancies created:

Mr B. D. Bell (President)  
Mr F. Nieuwland (Member of Council)  
Mr D.J. Onley (Member of Council)  
Dr H.A. Robertson (Member of Council)  
Mr P.M. Sagar (Member of Council)

Extra-ordinary vacancy:

Mr M. Nee (co-opted Treasurer) for three year term

Nominations close with the Secretary on 29th February 1992, and must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person nominated, who must also be a financial member of the Society. Please also submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee. Retiring Officers are eligible for re-election.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1992 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before 29 February 1992 in writing and be signed by the mover and seconder.

The 1992 OSNZ Annual Conference & A.G.M. will be held in Masterton on Saturday, 16 May.

R. EMPSON  
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

P.O. Box 12397  
Wellington

of OSNZ. The most successful way of recruitment is by word of mouth. Let's all do our part.

BRIAN D. BELL  
*President*

## OSNZ AGM May 1992

Next year's AGM will be held in Masterton over the weekend of 16-17 May. Wairarapa College and College House, in the centre of Masterton, have been booked for the conference and accommodation respectively. Transport to and from Wellington airport will be arranged by bus. Field trips will take in Wairarapa wetlands and the Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre. A semiformal dinner is planned for the Saturday night.

Full details of the AGM & conference will accompany the March issue of *Notornis*.

## Brian & Sue Bell - official farewell

Brian Bell is formally retiring from the Department of Internal Affairs. A farewell celebration for Brian & Sue is planned by his former Wildlife Service colleagues at the Pines Cabaret, Wellington, on 29 February 1992.

~~In recognition of their significant contribution to national and international conservation an invitation is kindly extended to associates in both the Ornithological Society and the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society to join with this gathering.~~

We hope to see you there.

For further details, please contact Richard Anderson, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 5086, Wellington or Don Merton, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington.

## Projects Assistance Fund

Council welcomes applications from OSNZ members, study groups and regions for assistance with projects on birds in New Zealand. Each year about \$6,000 is distributed from the interest earned by the Projects Assistance Reserve.

Council tends to give assistance to purchase equipment (e.g. Pesola balances, calipers) that can be used by other OSNZ members when a project is finished, or for travel costs, rather than for wages, food and accommodation.

In less than 500 words you should describe the purpose and methods of the project and include details of the number

of OSNZ members involved, and what other sources of funding you have applied for or received.

Please send applications to be considered at the May Council meeting to Hugh Robertson, Field Investigation Officer, 30 Deller Grove, Silverstream, by 15 April 1992.

**HUGH ROBERTSON**  
*Field Investigation Officer*

**Wanted – Coordinator  
for the planning stages of a  
new atlas of NZ birds**

It is over 20 years since fieldwork began for the *Atlas of New Zealand Birds* and many changes in bird distribution have taken place since then. OSNZ would like to produce a new atlas to show the state of the country's birds at the turn of the century. We hope to carry out field work over 5 years, starting in 1995.

The Society needs a volunteer coordinator/planner for the early stages of the project. The job will entail assessing the previous Atlas project; considering the content, format and publication of the new atlas; investigating sources of funding; and liaising with government agencies and other organisations.

If you are interested, please write to the Secretary, OSNZ, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington. An outline of any experience that would help you with the job would be appreciated.

**Volunteer needed – Scientific Day  
Coordinator**

Council has decided to introduce an annual Scientific Day into the Society's calendar of events. This would provide a forum for OSNZ members to present scientific information on Society schemes, regional studies, and institutional and private ornithological research. It would not replace talks and workshops that are currently associated with the AGM & Conference weekend.

The Scientific Day would be self-funding and would probably change venue each year.

Council seeks a volunteer to expand this concept, to organise the introduction of the first Scientific Day, and then coordinate subsequent annual meetings – it is envisaged that these would be organised by local committees.

If you are interested in helping, please contact the Secretary, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington.

**Dabchick Survey - Easter 1992**

During Easter (17-21 April) 1992, Hawkes Bay members plan to carry out a survey of lakes in the region in order to count Dabchicks. Members from other regions are invited to assist with the count. Anyone interested in participating should contact Christine McRae, P.O. Box 755, Hastings.

Hawkes Bay members would be happy to billet visitors and so help reduce the cost of accommodation.

**New Members**

It is very encouraging to see how many new members joined the Society in 1991. Let us hope the membership continues to prosper like this in the foreseeable future.

Welcome to the following 130 new members who have joined the Society this year.

Amsterdam Natural History Museum, P.B. & N.Y. Andrews, Jock Angus, Asahiya Shoten Ltd., Australian Antarctic Division, D. & J.M.C. Boag, E.L. Booth, Becky Brougham, Anna Bull, Hardy H. Campbell III, Rita Carter, W. & O. Chelley, Jenny Clay, Gideon Climo, Danielle Consedine, S.F. Cook, V.E. Cooksley, Michael Corrigan, James E. & Mary E. Crawford, Robert Creighton, Dalhousie University Library, Brian Darlow, J.F. Davidson, Rob & Anne Davis, Barbara Dingle, Andrew Dolling, Richard Early, Patricia Evans, Field Nat. Museum – Illinois, Barry Friend, D.E. Gaw, Mathew Gregory, J.E. Hague, Beth Halliburton, Ann Harris, J.A. Hawken, Ian D. Hayton, Thomas R. Howell, G.I. Hunt, Iowa State University, P.F. & F.V. Jenkins, Brian Jones, Phillipa Jones, Doris Johnston, Miles King, F. Kuyk, Barry Lang, Barry Lawrence, E.E. Lee, Michael Lee, Tracy Lindegren, Peter Lo & Kay Clapperton, Carole Long, Louisiana State University, Cameron Lucas, Peter & Hazel Luckstedt, David Lyttle, Janet & Ian McConnell, Gary C. McGuigan, Mr & Mrs A.F. McKenzie, Janine Martin, David Matheson, W. Mauke, Sarah Mathewson, Rosemary Messenger, Robert G. Mills, Abdul Moeed, Roger Moffatt, Gary Morgan, Dr C.A. Morris, D. Morton, Mrs Ngaio Munn, Kerry A. Muller, Rodney Neverman, A.C. Nielson, Mrs G. Norman, J.B. O'Malley, Ornithological Library – New Haven, Rachael Palmer, Adrian Paterson, Ruth Pemberton, Peg Perrott, Emmy Pratt, Tessa Quayle, Steven L. Rasmussen, Jill Roberts, Philip A. Rhodes, Lloyd Robbins, Alan Rogers, Heather Rogers, Hans-Ullrich Rosmer, Kerry H. Sanders, Rob Schuckard, Senckenbergische Bibliothek – Germany, Tim Shaw, David Shore, J.A. Sick, D.W. & G. Simpson, J. Ross Sinclair, Lorraine & Val Skelton, Yvonne A.N. Smith, Belinda Studholme, Fergus Sutherland, Mike Thoesen, Ellis Udy & Isobel Castro-

Udy, University of Alberta, University of California, University of Kentucky, Ben Walshe, Chris Warren, Christopher S. White, Gwen Wilson, Jenny Wood, Trevor Worthy, Pauline & David Yerex, Valerie Young, Pauline Zumbach.

**HAZEL HARTY**  
*Membership Secretary*

**Changes of RRs**

At its October meeting, Council confirmed the appointments of the following new Regional Representatives – Cathy Jones – Volcanic Plateau, taking over from Martin Day; and Richard Holdaway in Canterbury, taking over from Peter Reese. The addresses and phone numbers of all RRs can be found on the inside back cover of *Notornis*.

Council expresses its sincere thanks to Martin and Peter for their services on the Society's behalf during their time as RR.

**Mystery Bird # 5**

The upright stance and long neck and bill should have allowed most readers to recognise Mystery Bird #5 as a shag or cormorant. Worldwide, there are about 30 species of shags and 12 of these breed in New Zealand – Black, Pied, Little Black, Little, NZ-King, Stewart Island, Chatham Island, Bounty Island, Auckland Island, Campbell Island, Spotted, and Pitt Island – the greatest diversity of shag species anywhere.

Most shags are dark above and pale below at some stage, but the mystery bird cannot be a Little Black Shag or a dark phased Little or Stewart Island Shag as they do not have a pale front at any stage. Black Shags are also mainly black (not surprisingly), but juveniles can be quite white on the front. However, the mystery bird is tending chicks and so cannot be a juvenile.

King, pied phased Stewart Island, Chatham Island, and the subantarctic shags are robust birds with thick bills and uniform black backs. Most adults also have a distinctive white upperwing and scapular patches which are not visible on the mystery bird. Pied Shags are similarly robust and black backed, but never have upperwing patches.

The greyish upperwings and back, with black spots at the tips of the feathers, and the relatively long thin bill of the mystery bird eliminate all but the Spotted and Pitt Island Shags.

Breeding Spotted and Pitt Island Shags all have black crests on the forehead and rear crown and have striking white filoplumes over parts of the head and neck. However, Spotted Shags have dark heads



Spotted Shag in breeding plumage, Whitewash Head, Christchurch.

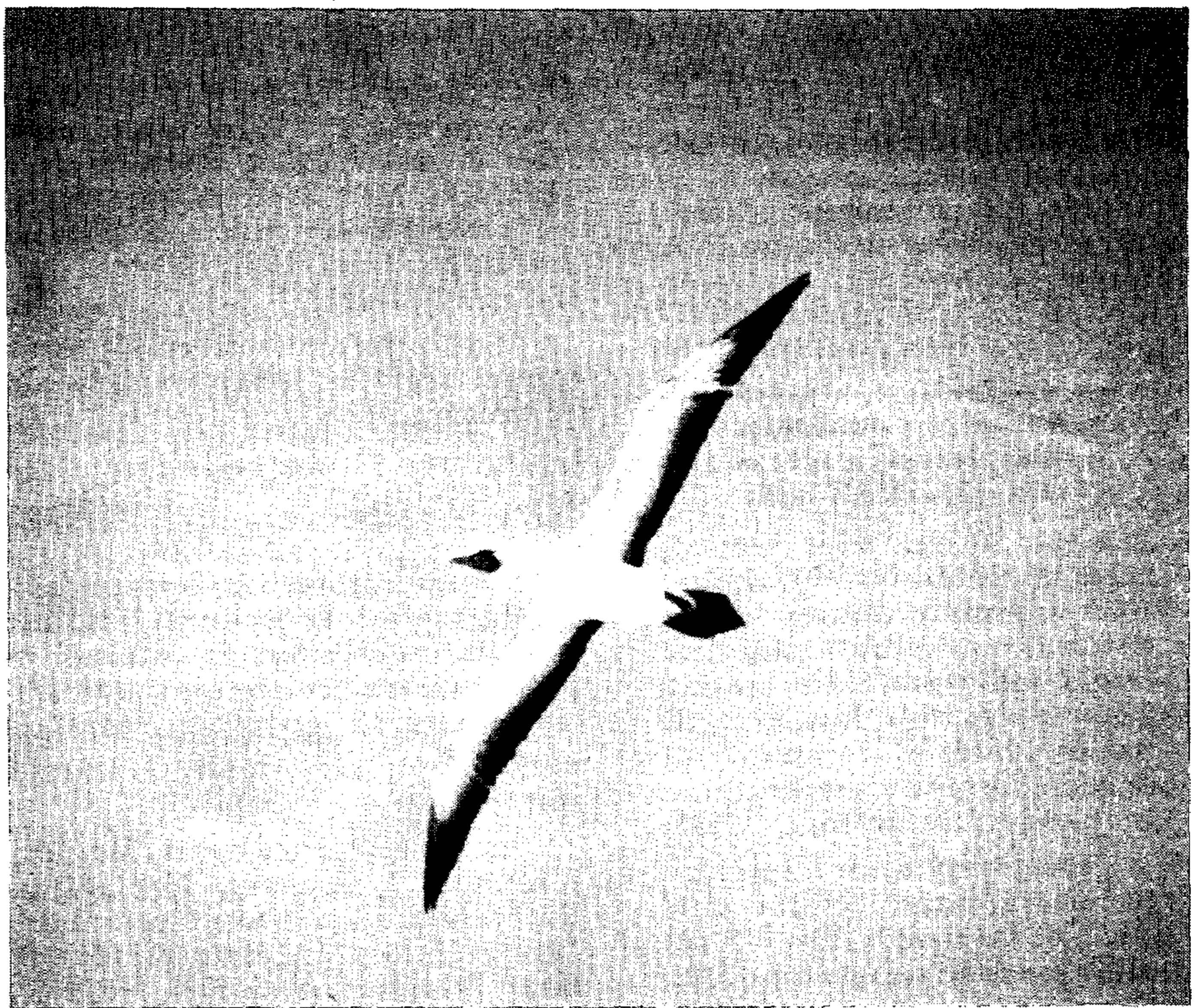
(Photo Paul Sagar)

with prominent white stripes running up each side of their throat and head to the eyes. In non-breeding plumages the crests and filoplumes become less pronounced. Breeding Pitt Island Shags always have a black head and throat – they never have the white stripe displayed by the Spotted Shag – therefore the mystery bird can only be a Pitt Island Shag.

Despite the yellow-footed Spotted/Pitt Island Shag group being endemic to New Zealand, much is still to be learnt about their behaviour, plumages, and taxonomy. The Blue Shag is a poorly defined subspecies of the Spotted Shag.

The group are frequent casualties of monofilament set nets and are vulnerable to disturbance at nesting and roosting sites. Although no censuses have been carried out, the population of Pitt Island Shags is thought to number less than 1000 pairs, confined to the Chatham Islands.

ALAN TENNYSON



### Mystery Bird # 6

Identify this bird. Answer next issue.

### Cattle Egrets 1991

Two-thirds of OSNZ regions made late-August counts and so national totals to compare with those of other years cannot be made. However, there was clearly no great change in overall numbers, although Waikato retains top score and Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa gained a large increase on recent years. Manawatu, usually a top

contender, lacked its usual Lake Horowhenua flock for the first time and, despite the presence of Max Maddock from New South Wales on count day, was well down on recent years.

**Northland:** No report, though the event of the year was a wing-tagged bird on 19 April seen by Elisabeth Price. It had been banded as a nestling on 12 January by Max Maddock's team at Shortland Wetland Centre, NSW. So, it was 3 months 7 days old and had travelled 1983 km. Nobody has seen it since!

**Auckland:** No August report but 75 at Paraki on 4/6; Mangere, 1 in August (Brian Ellis).

**South Auckland:** Aka Aka, 150 on 23/6, 86 on 1/8, 220 on 8/9; perhaps many had shifted to Rangiriri for count time (Anthea Goodwin & South Auckland team). Piako, 111 on 10/8 (Adrian Riegen), 107 on 7/9 (Folkert & Shirley Nieuwland, Barrie Heather).

**Waikato:** Lake Ngaroto, 75; Rangiriri, 257 (Mercia Barnes, Rita Carter, Jim & Mary Crawford, Roy Dench, Barbara Dingle, Folkert & Shirley Nieuwland, Stella & John Rowe, Hamish Spencer). Rangiriri, 330 on 10/8 (South Auckland team), 270 + on 6/9 (Barrie Heather).

A highlight was Waikato's second wing-tagged egret, first seen on 11/4 by Stella Rowe and Bev Woolwy. It had been banded at Shortland on 22/12/89. Still at Rangiriri at count time.

**Bay of Plenty:** Opotiki, 13 in June (Bill Sloan). Maketu, 25 on 7/9 (Paddy Latham, Barrie Heather). A May flock of 40 at Awaiti was not confirmed.



**Gisborne:** 11 (Jim Henley).

**Hawke's Bay:** Lake Poukawa, 34; Lake Hatuma, Waipukurau, 11 (Christine McRae).

**Taranaki:** No North Taranaki August report. South Taranaki nil after up to 15 near Hawera in May. Barrett's Lagoon, New Plymouth, 24 in June (Myk Davis).

**Wanganui:** No report.

**Manawatu:** Whirokino (Foxton), 110 (Malcolm Olsen, Max Maddock).

**Wairarapa:** Featherston, 53 (Hugh Robertson, Barrie Heather).

**Nelson:** Takaka, 57; Waimea Plains, 22 (Jenny Hawkins).

**Marlborough:** Grovetown, 24; Kaikoura, 24 (Bev Elliott, Bev North).

**West Coast:** 165: Karamea, 22; Orowaiti Estuary, 78; Totara Flat, 20; Harihari, 24; Whataroa, 16; Arahura Valley, 5 (Jack Davidson, Ian Gibson, Mrs Hall, Stewart Lauder, Mrs Minehan, Colin Miskelly, Richard Stocker, Barry Walker).

**Canterbury:** Clandeboye, 10; Lake Ellesmere, 58 (40 + 14 + 4); Waikuku nil, after 6 in July (Don Hadden, Kathleen Harrison, Peter Langlands, Sheila Petch, Paul Sagar).

**Otago:** Henley, 18; Stirling, 30 (Louise Foord, Ken Gager, Phil Garside, Lesley Gowans, George & Doreen Grant, Reinald Hoeffner, Derek Onley, Peter Schweigman, Alan Wright, David York).

**Southland:** No report.

BARRIE HEATHER



## RAOU Column

### Seabird bonanza and a new record for Australia

The RAOU Seabird Atlas Project has benefited from a recent trip to Antarctic waters. During September-October, the Project Officer, Mark Hindell, and his assistant, David Eades, spent 32 days at sea aboard the Australian Antarctic Division's research vessel *Aurora Australis* gathering census data for the project. Owing to equipment failure, the ship was forced to return to Hobart from MacQuarie Island for repairs – a windfall for Hindell & Eades as it enabled them to census the same stretch of ocean twice. Many hours were spent conducting quantitative counts of seabirds (just over 1000 10-minute counts were completed) and these data will be correlated with oceanographic and weather details collected at the same time. Of

particular note were sightings of Royal and Rockhopper Penguins at sea.

An exciting new project due to commence early in 1992 is the RAOU Beach Patrol Scheme. As the scheme will be modelled on the highly successful New Zealand scheme, it needs no further introduction to OSNZ members. Regional coordinators will help to gather data on this important area of research, one that has never before been attempted in Australia on a nationwide basis. New Zealander Paul Scofield, currently working on the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds* at RAOU Headquarters will be the overall coordinator of the project.

Seabirds continue to make the news. A storm-driven Grey Petrel, a bird that Australians would normally only see in Tasmanian waters in winter, was recovered alive in suburban Melbourne on 24 July. At the time of writing (late November) the bird is being cared for and the prognosis looks good for its eventual return to the sea. Another Australian seabird rarity, an Antarctic Petrel, was recovered beach-cast from King Island, Bass Strait, during August.

However, without doubt, the most exciting bird news lately has been the sighting of a Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, the first record for Australia. The bird, in second summer or adult summer plumage, was seen and photographed at Broome Sewage Works, NW Australia, in October. This species winters in Hong Kong and the Philippines and has been seen on a number of occasions in Irian Jaya, Papua New Guinea and the north Solomon Islands. It is no surprise that it has eventually turned up on Australia's northern coast.

DAVID ANDREW

## Annual conference of the Wader Study Group –

### Texel, The Netherlands, October 1991

The Wader Study Group (WSG), formed in 1970, is a generally northern hemisphere group dedicated to the research and conservation of wading birds. While the focus of much of its work has been in Europe, there is also a New World section and members are eagerly wanted from all the nether regions of the globe, including New Zealand!

The WSG 1991 annual conference was held on Texel, the first of the chain of islands which enclose the vast mudflats of the Waddensea, home of up to a million birds. A particularly notable feature of this conference was the overwhelming presence of New Zealanders with Alan Baker (known for his oystercatcher studies in the 1970s and now based in Canada) and Ray Pierce (Department of Conservation, Whangarei) giving keynote addresses, and

Phil Battley also contributing part of a paper. In addition to the 2-day standard conference there a 1-day symposium of *Shorebirds and the availability of their benthic prey*, a real boon for wader feeding enthusiasts.

The multitude of talks presented during the conference included migration, breeding, energetics, genetics, habitat use, micro-computer controlled telemetry to record activity patterns and physiological variables of waders(!), plus of course lots of shorebird-prey interactions. Some not quite randomly chosen talks were:

★ Waders and theories of bird migration, by Thomas Alerstan (Sweden), who indicated that despite humanities belief that we are the most developed vertebrate, birds still manage to migrate over some pretty wild geomagnetic anomalies and we really don't know how they do it.

★ Proposals for indexing wader populations, by Les Underhill (South Africa), who made inputting a household word, but pointed out that while his method can be used to determine, as well as we can, missing information from count series, this does not mean that we can all go bird watching from the comfort of our homes while sitting behind our personal computer. Apparently, actually counting birds is better than making up figures.

★ Bruno Ens (Netherlands) suggested that the real reason some Oystercatchers wait 14 years before breeding is that the social system in his study colony is such that it is profitable for young non-breeders to join queues for advantageous reproductive positions (good spots). I also got the impression that when the Dutch aren't building dykes they put their excess energy into building elaborate elevated hides.

The shorebird feeding symposium (undoubtedly the highlight of the conference for many) should have taught people that prey availability is a function of several factors – prey depth (prey may be out of reach of the bill), prey may be too large to be swallowed, prey may be too small to be profitable, smaller prey have less chance of being encountered, and prey may occur in too low a density to be fed on. All these factors mean that only a small proportion of the total prey present may be available to birds, so meeting their feeding requirements may be no mean feat.

Not all of the talks were based on tidal mudflats. Avocets and Black-tailed Godwits were shown to be able to deplete totally the chironomid larvae of a Dutch lake in only 4-5 hours of feeding. The birds move around though and rarely revisit areas where they have foraged already.

Ray Pierce introduced the European world to the wonders of alpine riverbeds and 3 specialist feeders – Black Stilt, Wrybill, and Ibisbill: He showed how each species is well adapted to foraging on braided riverbeds, be they in the Southern

TREASURER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1990

1990 was a particular active year for the Society, with the hosting of the 20th International Ornithological Congress, and also special publications to mark our first 50 years. Expenditure was considerably in excess of income, due mainly to the production and free distribution to members of the two anniversary publications. These were "A Flying Start", the 200 page history of New Zealand ornithology and "Fifty Years of Bird Study in New Zealand", an index to 'NOTORNIS' from 1939-89.

Some delays associated with changes in the holders of the treasurer's position explain the level of cash held at year end, and indeed the lateness of this report. Membership showed a serious decline at 31.12.90 but this had recovered to a total of 972 by June 1991.

The Projects Assistance Fund continued to play an important role in supporting a number of studies. Grants made in the year total \$8794, made up as follows:

|                   |             |                          |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| G. Lovei          | 700         | Passerines in Manawatu   |
| J. Dowding        | 964         | New Zealand Dotterel     |
| M. Imber          | 2800        | Pitcairn Island          |
| C. Challies       | 280         | Penguin predator control |
| H. Robertson      | 1000        | Central Passerine Group  |
| B. Bell/G. Taylor | 2000        | Shearwater transfer      |
| T. Dennison       | 550         | OSNZ Slide Collection    |
| P. Battley        | 500         | Manawatu estuary         |
|                   | <u>8794</u> |                          |

Brian Ellis  
Acting Treasurer

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

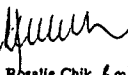
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AUDITOR'S REPORT

THE MEMBERS

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

In my opinion the financial statements on pages 3 to 6 fairly represent the financial position of the Society at 31 December 1990 and the results of its activities for the year ended on that date.



Rosalie Chik, B.A., ACA

Wellington

15 October 1991

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

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BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1990

|  | Notes | 1990          | 1989          |
|--|-------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                          |       |               |               |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                  |       |               |               |
| Bank of New Zealand                    |       | 8030          | 8237          |
| - Cheque Account                       |       | 65000         |               |
| - Autocall Account                     |       |               |               |
| Funds Held                             |       | 2258          | 9820          |
| Amounts Owing to the Society           | (11)  | 30652         | 10000         |
| Short Term Investments                 |       | 32414         | 89625         |
| Stock of 'Notornis'                    | (2)   | 18315         | 100           |
| Stock of other sales items             | (3)   | 21041         | 10717         |
| Goods & Services Tax refund owing      |       | 4194          | 3225          |
| Residents Withholding Tax refund owing |       | 2289          | 194           |
| Loan from Projects Assistance Fund     |       |               | 1000          |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>            |       | <b>184201</b> | <b>132918</b> |
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>                    |       |               |               |
| Library at valuation                   |       | 1000          | 1000          |
| Computer                               |       | 3763          |               |
| Less provision for depreciation        |       | 2632          | 1131          |
| Computers and printers                 |       | 8285          | 1883          |
| Less provision for depreciation        | (12)  | 828           | 7457          |
| Display at National Wildlife Centre    |       | 1311          |               |
| Less provision for depreciation        |       | 262           | 1049          |
| Display panels for I.O.C.              |       | 1000          |               |
| Less provision for depreciation        |       | 100           | 900           |
| <b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>              |       | <b>11537</b>  | <b>4063</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                    |       | <b>195738</b> | <b>136981</b> |

BALANCE SHEET (continued)

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1990

LIABILITIES, RESERVES AND ACCUMULATED FUNDS

|  | Notes | 1990          | 1989          |
|--|-------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Liabilities</b>                                       |       |               |               |
| Amounts owed by the Society                              | (10)  | 48131         | 16964         |
| Subscriptions Paid in advance                            |       | 14584         | 91            |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>                                 |       | <b>62715</b>  | <b>17055</b>  |
| <b>Reserves</b>  |       |               |               |
| Life subscriptions reserve                               | (4)   | 12195         | 11443         |
| Robert Falla Memorial Award Reserve                      | (5)   | 2493          | 2377          |
| Projects Assistance Fund                                 | (6)   | 77144         | 73069         |
| A.T. Edgar Junior Award Reserve                          | (7)   | 1618          | 1520          |
| Publications Reserve                                     | (8)   | 1846          | 1528          |
| Charles Fleming Memorial Reserve                         | (9)   | 3600          | 3407          |
| <b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>                                    |       | <b>98896</b>  | <b>93344</b>  |
| <b>Accumulated Funds</b>                                 |       |               |               |
| Balance at beginning of year                             |       | 26582         | 26308         |
| Prior year's adjustments -                               |       |               |               |
| Stock revaluation  |       | 15400         | 2923          |
| G.S.T. overprovided                                      |       | (1819)        |               |
|  |       | 40163         | 29231         |
| Less excess of expenditure over income for the year      |       | 6036          | 2649          |
| <b>TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>                           |       | <b>24127</b>  | <b>26582</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES, RESERVES AND ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b> |       | <b>195738</b> | <b>136981</b> |

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

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STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1990

|   | Notes | 1990         | 1989         |
|---|-------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>GENERAL INCOME</b>                                       |       |              |              |
| Subscriptions - New Zealand                                 |       | 29656        |              |
| Overseas  |       | 8392         | 30409        |
| Transfer from Life Subscriptions Reserve                    |       | 1355         | 1271         |
| Donations   |       | 1764         | 1934         |
| Profit from sales:  |       |              |              |
| Greeting Cards  |       | 3191         | 365          |
| Notornis Back Numbers                                       |       | 1131         | 4311         |
| Atlases   |       | 559          | 455          |
| Checklist   |       | 1626         | -            |
| T Shirts  |       | 292          | -            |
| Car Stickers  |       | 65           | -            |
| Sundry Income   |       | 1965         | 80           |
| Grant from Lottery Grants Board                             | (12)  | 8285         | -            |
| Advertising   |       | 596          | -            |
| <b>TOTAL GENERAL INCOME</b>                                 |       | <b>58877</b> | <b>38825</b> |
| <b>INVESTMENT AND OTHER INCOME</b>                          |       |              |              |
| Interest earned by all funds                                |       | 10897        | 12535        |
| Royalties on Field Guide to N.Z. Birds                      |       | 6231         | 4132         |
|   |       | 17128        | 16667        |
| Less Royalties credited to Projects Ass. Fund               |       | 6231         | 4132         |
| Less Interest credited to reserves                          |       | 8481         | 9410         |
|   |       | 14712        | 13542        |
| Total Investment and Other Income retained in General Funds |       | 2416         | 3125         |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>   |       | <b>61293</b> | <b>41950</b> |

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)  
STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1990

Page 6

|  | \$           | \$           |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| <b>COSTS AND EXPENSES</b>  | <b>1990</b>  | <b>1989</b>  |
| Printing and Distribution of 'Notornis'                          | 22300        | 28199        |
| Printing 'OSNZ NEWS'   | 6121         | 6422         |
| Printing 50 yr Index to 'Notornis'                               | 20827        |              |
| Less grant from Lottery Grants Board                             | 10000        | 10827        |
| Printing 'A Flying Start'  | 17376        |              |
| Less grant from Lottery Grants Board                             | 2000         | 15376        |
| General Expenses   | 3234         | 2873         |
| Printing and Stationery  | 3655         | 1108         |
| Travelling Expenses  | 2746         | 1623         |
| Regional Representatives' Allowances                             | 340          | 280          |
| Postage and Tolls  | 119          | 1630         |
| Card Storage   | -            | 481          |
| Depreciation - Computers   | 1580         | 752          |
| - Displays   | 231          | 131          |
| Audit  | 800          | 1100         |
| <b>TOTAL COSTS AND EXPENSES</b>                                  | <b>67329</b> | <b>44599</b> |
| Excess Expenditure over Income transferred to Accumulated Funds: | 6036         | 2649         |

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC) Page 7

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1990

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 follows:

(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 received from the sale of 'Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand' (Falla, Sibson, Turbott) are credited to the Projects Assistance Fund.

(c) Interest Earned

Interest earned by investment of reserve funds has been deducted from income and credited to respective reserves at a rate of 9.08%. This rate is calculated by apportioning the total interest received over Reserves and Accumulated Funds.

(d) Depreciation

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

2. STOCKS OF 'NOTORNIS'

It has been a policy in recent years to print extra copies of the quarterly journal to be held for eventual sale to libraries, institutions and new members. To account for this situation more accurately, the stock has been revalued and current production in excess of present membership requirements will be charged to this stock.

3. STOCKS OF SALE ITEMS

These are valued at cost in all cases, except Greeting Cards which are continued at the revaluation applied last year.

4. LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS RESERVE

|                                   | \$           | \$           |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                   | 1990         | 1989         |
| Balance at beginning of year      | 11443        | 10909        |
| Life Subscriptions received       | 1067         | 518          |
| Interest earned                   | 1040         | 1287         |
|                                   | 13550        | 12714        |
| 10% transferred to General Income | 1355         | 1271         |
| <b>Balance at end of year</b>     | <b>12195</b> | <b>11443</b> |

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS (continued)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1991

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|   | \$           | \$           |
|---|--------------|--------------|
|   | 1990         | 1989         |
| <b>5. Robert Falla Memorial Award Reserve</b> |              |              |
| Balance at beginning of year                  | 2377         | 2189         |
| Interest earned                               | 216          | 258          |
| Donations                                     | -            | 30           |
|   | 2593         | 2477         |
| Less Award to B.D. Heather                    | 100          | 100          |
| <b>BALANCE AT END OF YEAR</b>                 | <b>2493</b>  | <b>2377</b>  |
| <b>6. Projects Assistance Fund</b>            |              |              |
| Balance at beginning of year                  | 73069        | 64531        |
| Royalties on Field Guide                      | 6231         | 4132         |
| Interest earned                               | 6638         | 7615         |
|   | 85938        | 76278        |
| Less grants made                              | 8794         | 4019         |
| Plus grant refunded                           | -            | 810          |
| <b>BALANCE AT END OF YEAR</b>                 | <b>77144</b> | <b>73069</b> |
| <b>7. A.T. Edgar Junior Award</b>             |              |              |
| Balance at beginning of year                  | 1520         | 1117         |
| Interest earned                               | 138          | 132          |
| Donations                                     | 100          | 271          |
|   | 1758         | 1520         |
| Less Awards - M. Bell                         | 70           |              |
| - D. Bell                                     | 70           |              |
|   | 140          | -            |
| <b>BALANCE OF END OF YEAR</b>                 | <b>1618</b>  | <b>1520</b>  |
| <b>8. Publications Reserve</b>                |              |              |
| Balance at beginning of year                  | 1528         | 1000         |
| Interest earned                               | 139          | 118          |
| Donations                                     | 172          | 410          |
| <b>BALANCE AT END OF YEAR</b>                 | <b>1846</b>  | <b>1528</b>  |

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS (continued)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1990

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|   | \$          | \$          |
|---|-------------|-------------|
|   | 1990        | 1989        |
| <b>9. Fleming Memorial Reserve</b>  |             |             |
| Balance at beginning of year  | 3407        | -           |
| Donations   | 1403        | 3407        |
| Interest earned   | 310         | -           |
|   | 5120        |             |
| Less Purchase of plaque   | (770)       |             |
| Studentships to I.O.C.  | (750)       |             |
| <b>Balance at end of year</b>   | <b>3600</b> | <b>3407</b> |
| <b>10. Amounts Owed by the Society</b>  |             |             |
| Te Rau Press Ltd.   |             |             |
| December 'Notornis' and OSNZ NEWS   | 12703       |             |
| Random Century Ltd.   |             |             |
| Printing Checklist and 'Flying Start'   | 25986       |             |
| Projects Assistance grants unpaid   | 8284        |             |
| Expense reimbursements  | 271         |             |
| General Expenses  | 87          |             |
| Audit Fee accrual   | 800         |             |
|   | 48131       |             |
| <b>11. Amounts Owning to the Society</b>  |             |             |
| Advance to International Ornithological Congress Committee  | 10000       |             |
| Lottery Board grants  | 18305       |             |
| Sales made by I.O.C.  | 1447        |             |
| B.N.Z. Interest accrued   | 900         |             |
|   | 30652       |             |
| <b>12. Grants Received</b>  |             |             |
| Grants were received from the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board to cover the full cost of a computer and printer for each of the Society's two major schemes, Beach Patrol and Nest Records. The equipment purchased has been listed as an asset and the grants included with income for the year. |             |             |

Alps or Himalayas, while exhibiting very different bill shapes and feeding techniques.

With 36 talks during the conference I have only skimmed the surface here. Another highlight was a Siberian evening, with a range of superb slides and information from various researchers.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the weekend was the phenomenal growth in *WSG membership* from some countries. New Zealand led the way with a trebling of the membership, which now stands at 3 (Paul Sagar need not feel so lonely anymore). However, to maintain this growth rate requires 6 new members next year and 18 in 1993. Can we do it?

The *Wader Study Group Bulletin* is published 3 times a year, and supplements are produced regularly (such as one on the migration of Lesser Knots, due in December 1991). Some recent articles in the *WSG Bulletins* have been about Slender-billed Curlew in the Balkans, the seasonal distributions of all North American shorebirds, the foraging behaviour of Terek Sandpipers in Thailand, and a review of the Australasian Wader Study Group.

Membership on how to join the *WSG* can be obtained from the membership secretary, Rodney West, Farnham Barn, Farnham, Saxmundham, Suffolk, England. Expand your horizons and join the *WSG* now!

PHIL BATTLETT

## Colour flagged waders in New Zealand

Remember the request for members to keep a watch for migratory waders with coloured leg flags (*OSNZ news* 58: 5)? Well there are certainly some around this year. Already I have heard of three sightings of Lesser Knots with orange leg flags—one each at Mangere (photographed by Ray Clough), Miranda (Gillian Eller), and Ruakaka (Ray Pierce). Sheila Petch, Kathleen Harrison and Colin Hill also report an orange-flagged Red-necked Stint at Lake Ellesmere—perhaps the same bird they saw there last summer.

All these birds have been banded in Victoria, Australia, since January 1990.

PAUL SAGAR

## NZ Dotterels given a helping hand

A pair of NZ Dotterels nest every summer on our beach. Their nest is usually situated on a small sandy isthmus just above high-water, right in the track of people, dogs, and tractors towing boats to the water. The birds work frantically, drooping their wings in an attempt to draw all these intruders away from the nest.

A neighbour noticed that a tractor tyre had passed very close to the nest, so

dragged a large piece of driftwood beside the nest to present an obstacle to some of these intruders.

We also decided to make four signs—"Dotterels nesting. Please leave in peace"—with a drawing of a dotterel. These were placed on four sides of the nest, each sign being about 2m from the nest. I thought these signs would surely bring about the destruction of the eggs, not having much faith in human nature. While we were erecting the signs a rather aggressive person, who was nearby, demanded to know what we were doing. We explained about the birds and to our surprise, and without further comment he gathered up his children and three dogs and took them to another part of the beach.

The dotterels did not seem at all concerned by these bits of wood and people tended to shy away from the area, leaving the dotterels to their 16m<sup>2</sup> of sand. Eventually, all three dotterel chicks survived to hatch and were taken by the adults to the safety of a large grassy area.

Two signs survived the incubation period, one was carried off by a very high tide and the other was found in a fire.

Most people seem to have some conservation consciousness in these times and I think no one minds surrendering small areas of our sandy beaches to these beautiful birds. Perhaps if you know of a pair of NZ Dotterels which loses out to marauding humans and their pets, then you could put up a few signs. However, if the birds are successful in rearing their chicks without any assistance, it is probably best just to leave them to it.

CHRIS SALE

## Antarctic Petrels off Stewart island

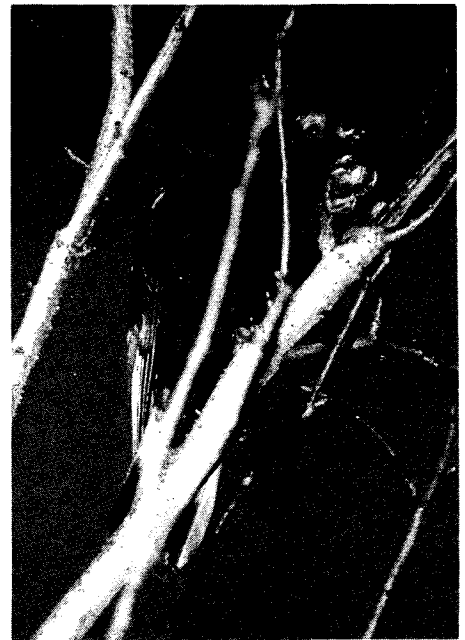
In late September, a fisherman reported 2 Antarctic Petrels feeding ravenously on fish scraps thrown from his boat. At the time, the boat was off Easy harbour, on the south coast of Stewart Island.

During October, 5 storm-wrecked Antarctic petrels were picked up along the Bluff coast and on Oreti Beach. Beach patrol records indicate that nationally, the Antarctic Petrel is a rare and irregular visitor, so the presence of these birds in Foveaux Strait is interesting. Following an autumn and winter with hardly any dead birds on local beaches, recent beach patrols have turned up dozens of Short-tailed Shearwaters, plus Blue Petrels and Antarctic Fulmars, 2 Native Pigeons, and a lump of ambergris.

LLOYD ESLER & ERIC BLACK

## Adaptable Kaka

With possums and wasps competing for their food, I was most heartened to see a Kaka adapting to a new food source. On



Kaka feeding on emperor gum moth chrysalis.  
(Photo Bruce MacKareth)

11/8/91, I photographed a Kaka which for a month had been regularly visiting a dairy farm on the Hauraki Plains. The attraction was a seemingly endless supply of emperor gum moth chrysalis on liquid amber trees. The massive cocoons were prised loose, held in a foot and broken open. I was told that the Kaka also ate berries on the melia tree. The Kaka was certainly a long way from any remnants of native bush.

BRUCE MACKARETH

## Magpies and our smaller birds

I joined the Muriwai Golf Club 20 years ago and at that time the only magpie in the area was a semi-tame bird that was fed by the caretaker. Now the course is divided into 5 territories, where nesting groups of magpies are resident. That means that 12-15 magpies are permanently on the course, with up to 30 present at the end of the breeding season. The territories of these birds also spill over into the surrounding farmland and the pine forests which adjoin the golf course.

The smaller birds on the golf course are a constant source of interest to me because the fairways provide food for many, as do the clumps of trees that survive between greens and tees. The course is home to a number of other permanent residents—Welcome Swallow, Fantail, Grey Warbler, Pipit, and Silvereye among the native birds, plus Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Redpoll, Chaffinch, Starling, Blackbird, California Quail, Pheasant, Song Thrush, Hedge Sparrow, House Sparrow, and the magpies of course.

I am coming to the conclusion that the magpie is a menace to some of our birds.



In many years of worry over my golf handicap, I have mapped the territories of the Fantails and have come to expect them in particular clumps of trees between the fairways. However, I have seen a magpie attack a Fantail that was flying across a fairway; the pursuit was persistent. With the exception of one pair, all the Fantails have disappeared from the course and I cannot help wondering whether the magpies have killed them. There have been few fledgling Fantails about the course in the past few years despite them being a prolific and successful breeder if given half a chance.

I watched a pair of Blackbirds defending a nest against the searching attacks of a magpie, and recently saw a magpie family twice attack a pair of Pheasants at the golf course. When attacked, the male Pheasant cowered away through the long grass, but the female jumped at each attack and was hit by a wing of the attacking magpie. Several times, a magpie landed for a split second on the back of the female Pheasant, which eventually left through the long grass.

Goldfinches flock on to the golf course during the winter, several hundred birds being in the flocks early in the season. The birds disperse in spring until there is scarcely a pair on the course. Some years Goldfinch numbers reach almost 1500 and the several flocks are accompanied by Greenfinches, Redpolls, Chaffinches and House Sparrows. These flocks are wise to the ways of golfers and avoid golf balls quite easily, but the attacks of magpies are a different matter. Although I have not seen a magpie take a small bird from the flocks, their attacks are persistent and cause the flocks to disperse in all directions. Pipits have always used the seaward side of the course for feeding and nesting. Few remain and I do not know if magpies have contributed to this decline.

Are my anxieties for our small birds unwarranted? I would like to know if other members of the Society have noticed the behaviour of magpies, particularly with regard to other birds. I sorely miss the Fantails at Muriwai and would be pleased if members could let me have any other relevant observations.

AMYAS RINGER

## Sound Recordings

Recently, I received a full set of 8 cassette tapes by way of exchange from Roberto Straneck of the Natural History Museum, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Roberto Straneck started taping in the field over 20 years ago and uses much the same kind of equipment that I do—various models of the Uher range of tape machines, with a parabolic reflector and high quality condenser microphones.

The technical quality of these tapes is excellent, with clean and clear recordings,

which is an achievement in itself. Each cassette has its own booklet which gives brief details, in Spanish and English, of each species presented. Scientific names are also included. A full bilingual index is included, as is a map of Argentina which shows the areas where the recordings were made. All recordings are of wild birds.

The set of tapes covers Argentina by regions, thereby ensuring a good coverage of all the habitats found in that country. Titles are - *Songs & Voices of Patagonic Birds*, *Songs of Pampean Birds Volume 1*, *Songs of Pampean Birds Volume 2*, *Songs of the Birds of Misiones Volume 1*, *Songs of the Birds of Misiones Volume 2*, *Song Birds of the Central Highlands*, *Songs & Voices of the Northwest - Birds of the Forest & Puna*, *Songs of the Birds of the Esteros & Palmares*.

Seabirds of the open oceans are not featured, however, at least one penguin (Magellanic) is included from the NZ Checklist. Many of the South American waders are also included in the NZ list.

Other recent arrivals are 2 tapes from Radio Finland, Helsinki: *Bird Summer in Lapland* and a later production, *Aanikuvia Luonnosta*. Each tape has its own booklet. The Lapland booklet is in Finnish with an English summary and full scientific names.

Finally, I have also received a cassette compiled from sounds recorded from the Amazonian rain forest in Columbia by Richard Ranft, curator of the National Sound Archive, London. The cassette represents the sound sequences of a single day, from the forest floor to the high canopy. A CD version is also available.

LESLIE B. MCPHERSON

## Recent Reports

A Recent Reports was prepared for this issue of *OSNZ news*. However, unfortunately it appears to have gone missing in the postal system and there was not time to prepare another version before the newsletter went to press.

Recent Reports will return in the March *OSNZ news*, so please forward all those sightings from your holidays to me (Derek Onley, 49 Bernera Street, RD1, Waikouaiti, Otago) by 10 February.

DEREK ONLEY

## Late sighting of Long-tailed Cuckoo

On 6 April 1991 we were observing a group of Whiteheads from the vehicle track to Mt Climie, Upper Hutt, when our attention was drawn to a persistent importuning sound from a bush. After a brief search we were surprised to find a young Long-tailed Cuckoo, which the Whiteheads were

making frequent visits to feed. The Whiteheads were very active, which made accurate counting impossible, but we estimated there were 6-8 birds in the flock. The cuckoo made a number of short flights to other trees and each time it was quickly followed by at least one Whitehead.

On our return to Mt Climie an hour later we found the cuckoo in a similar location, but on the opposite side of the track. After a minute or two it flew down from the tree, glided across the track just a few metres from us, and disappeared into the bush followed by Whiteheads.

Although most Long-tailed Cuckoos leave New Zealand in February or March, we understand that April records are not uncommon. Nevertheless, our 6 April sighting must be a very late record for a young bird still dependent on Whiteheads.

ALLAN MUNRO & JANICE WOON

## Recent Publications

Baker, A.J.; Peck, M.K.; Goldsmith, M.A. 1990. Genetic and morphometric differentiation in introduced populations of Common Chaffinches (*Fringilla coelebs*) in New Zealand. *Condor* 92: 76-88. Chaffinches have differentiated very little genetically and morphometrically since the introduction of about 400 birds from England last century.

Dann, P. 1991. Breeding territories, nesting and the timing of breeding of the Double-banded Plover *Charadrius bicinctus*. *Corella* 15: 13-18. Breeding of Banded Dotterels was studied on Kaitorete Spit and the Cass River Delta, Canterbury. Laying began in mid-August and peaked in early October. Mean clutch was 2.81 eggs.

Disney, H.J. De S. 1991. Notes on sexing and plumages of the Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxana*. *Corella* 15: 29-31. The sexes can be determined by the relative lengths of the streamer of the outer tail feather, the difference in length between the tip of this feather and the next, and the shape of these feathers.

Jolly, J.N.; Colbourne, R.M. 1991. Translocations of the Little Spotted Kiwi (*Apteryx owenii*) between offshore islands of New Zealand. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 21: 143-149. Discusses the criteria for assessment of islands for translocations, and provides preliminary results of two transfers.

Millener, P.R.; Worthy, T.H. 1991. Contributions to New Zealand's Late Quaternary avifauna. II: *Dendroscansor decurvirostris*, a new genus and species of wren (*Aves: Acanthisittidae*). *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 21: 179-200. Describes a distinctive NZ wren from subfossil remains found in cave sediments. The extraordinarily long bill suggests that the species probed crevices in bark. It is likely that the bird was not able to fly.

Seddon, P.J.; Davis, L.S. 1989. Nest-site selection by Yellow-eyed Penguins. *Condor* 91: 653-659. Nest-site selection is influenced primarily by vegetation, particularly that which provides dense cover.

Sherley, G.H. 1990. Co-operative breeding in Rifleman (*Acanthistia chloris*) benefits to parents, offspring and helpers. *Behaviour* 112: 1-19. The workload of the breeding male was significantly reduced when helpers were present, but even then he usually contributed more than his mate. This did not improve the productivity or survival of the male parent, however, it did improve the survival of the female parent.

van Heezik, Y. 1990. Patterns of variability of growth in the Yellow-eyed Penguin. *Condor* 92: 904-912. Seasonal and geographical variations in growth rates were small and appeared to reflect variations in food supply.

Waas, J.R. Intraspecific variation in social repertoires: evidence from cave- and burrow-dwelling Little Blue Penguins. *Behaviour* 115: 63-90. From a study on Banks Peninsula, it was concluded that Little Blue Penguins appear to alter the size of their agonistic repertoire and the characteristics of agonistic behaviours in response to changes in their breeding sites; this may be the key to competing and breeding successfully in a wide range of habitats.

Worthy, T.H.; Edwards, A.R. Millener, P.R. 1991. The fossil record of moas (*Aves: Dinornithiformes*) older than the Otira (last) Glaciation. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 21: 101-118. Reviews 40 records of fossil moas considered to be older than 75 000 years; the oldest is concluded to be no more than 2.5 million years old. There is still no significant record of the presumed long history of moas.

PAUL SAGAR

## **AWSG news**

An Australasian Wader Study Group mini-expedition to Vietnam has returned after a successful month of work on the coast of the Gulf of Tonkin. Brett Lane, Luke Naismith and Jon Starks of Australia, with members of Hanoi University's Wetland & Waterbird Working Group, studied the waders and other waterbirds of Xuan Thuy Reserve in the delta of the Red River from mid-March to mid-April.

The reserve is the first Ramsar site designated in south-east Asia, and the expedition was timed to coincide with the northwards migration of the Palearctic breeding waders of the East Asian/West Pacific flyway, as little is known of the importance of the area as a staging ground for these birds.

Some 220 waders were mist-netted –

mainly Curlew Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints and Large Sand Dotterels. The reserve appears to be most important for these species, although there were also substantial numbers of Black-tailed Godwits and Redshanks, and significant numbers of Grey Plovers, amongst the 8000 birds counted. It may be especially important as a migratory refueling area for Large Sand Dotterels, most of which breed in the Gobi Desert region of northern China and Mongolia and spend their non-breeding season along the northern coast of Australia.

Before Xuan Thuy was declared a reserve, the area was used by wildfowling who caught migrating waders for food. Indeed, local hunters brought the expedition 4 bands they had taken from harvested birds, and 2 of these proved to have been originally placed on Red-necked Stints in Victoria, Australia. Another was from a Black-tailed Godwit banded in Hong Kong. Moreover, the hunters claimed to have collected a rice bowl full of bands, which were eventually thrown out because they had no apparent use.

The expedition also discovered in their Vietnamese colleagues an enthusiasm to continue monitoring the reserve and further elucidating its importance to the waders of the flyway. A management plan is being prepared to conserve the natural resources of the area, not only for the birds, but also for the people there who depend upon, for example, the fish that use the mangroves as a nursery. Vietnam, one of the poorest nations of south-east Asia, was the first in the region to become a signatory to the Ramsar Convention, and is showing an example of environmental responsibility in its attitude to the waders and other waterbirds of Xuan Thuy.

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 AWSG Administrative Secretary, 34 Centre Avenue, Vermont, Victoria 3133, Australia.

HUGO PHILLIPPS  
AWSG Publicity Officer

## **Magpies feeding over mudflats**

On 29 May 1991 I observed 3 immature White-backed Magpies feeding over exposed mudflats, just below the neap high tide line on the Avon-Heathcote estuary. The birds foraged in a loose group and made shallow pecks into the substrate, in addition to displacing the shells of dead molluscs. Occasionally, the birds would stand erect before resuming their feeding. Their prey could not be identified, but the lack of beach-washed debris over the sandflats meant that there was no suitable habitat for larger amphipods, which are

probably the major prey of magpies feeding along shorelines.

Pied Oystercatchers displayed alarm behaviour in response to the magpies; in addition, an Asiatic Whimbrel flew away.

This is the first time I have seen magpies feeding over open sandflats and it may represent further habitat exploration of this opportunistic species.

PETER LANGLANDS

## **Regional Roundup**

### **Northland**

The Poor Knights Islands were chosen as the destination of Northland's first seabird trip in recent years and was a resounding success. We left Tutukaka at 08.45 on 19 October and headed out to the Sugarloaf, past the Pinnacles, along the eastern side of the main islands and down to Rikoriko Cave, where we anchored for lunch. Here we could hear the Bellbirds singing and see parakeets flying high above us. 17 species of seabirds were seen with the highlight being a white giant petrel. Large numbers of prions were a feature of the day, as well as White-faced Storm Petrels, Diving Petrels, and 3 species of shearwater to name a few. A mollymawk - the only one seen - did not come close enough to be identified. Three or four Common Dolphins escorted the boat briefly, both on the way out and the way home, and a large male Fur Seal was seen resting on a rock ledge on the Sugarloaf. Offshore from Matapouri on the way home we saw 2 whales and these allowed us to approach reasonably close, allowing good views. However, it proved impossible to see the top of the head and so Sei or Brydes was the best we could do at identifying them.

A Naturalist at the Top End was the subject of a slide show I gave at our October meeting. Everything from box jellyfish and corals to frilled lizards and crocodiles, magnetic termites and a host of birdlife.

The October west coast beach patrol turned up 4 Antarctic Petrels, 2 Wandering Albatrosses, and several mollymawks and giant petrels. December 1991 marks 20 years of Northland beach patrolling and a special beach patrol and barbecue is planned to mark the event.

(Pat Miller)

### **Auckland**

At our September meeting Folkert Nieuwland told us about his work in the Whangamarino Swamp, and it was especially interesting to learn about his continuing studies to record recolonisation

of the large area which was devastated by fire in 1989, Later that month we made a trip to the areas of the swamp recommended by Folkert and although the weather was not kind, we did see something of this very rich wetland.

On the weekend of 21-22 September Geoff Arnold led a most successful trip to Pureora and Mapara Forests. The 22 members camped in the Pureora accommodation and spent Saturday exploring there, which included seeing a partially albino Kokako. On Sunday, they went into the Mapara Forest where the reserve manager, Phillip Bradfield, was most helpful in guiding the party and explaining the current initiatives being undertaken in this excellently preserved forest. Kokakos were seen again, and most of the party had excellent views of a young male NZ Falcon.

Little Barrier Island was visited by a party of Auckland members on the weekend of 27-29 September. We were sorry to be restricted to 12 participants and 2 nights stay, but Little Barrier Island is always a fabulous place to visit. The return boat trip was 'memorable' and many of the party fed the petrels.

The October meeting had a very interesting talk from Stella Rowe on her subantarctic trip on the tall ship *Tradewind*, supported by some excellent slides of those very photogenic birds and beasts of the islands. Our planned day cruise on the outer Hauraki Gulf unfortunately had to be canceled through insufficient starters maybe another sign of the economic times.

David Crockett spoke to the November meeting and brought us up to date on the Taiko project and other work on the Chathams. It was good to learn the David estimates that there is now a population of over 100 Taiko.

(Brian Ellis)

### South Auckland

Pam Agnew and her team made a good start on the Pied Stilt banding before Pam left for a year's leave in Australia. Since then, Tony Habraken and David Lawrie have succeeded in banding 60 more birds at Drury, Puni, Kopuku, and Miranda. More chicks are under observation, so the total should be increased before the end of the nesting season.

We surveyed Mataitai in September. Four pairs of NZ Dotterels were not yet breeding and we suspected that a few very tired godwits were new arrivals. At Kawakawa Bay, at least 100 Tuis were feeding in the flowering kowhai trees. In October we went to the Gannet colony at Muriwai, where some birds were already incubating. We were particularly interested in being shown a grassy area outside the protecting fence which had been 'mown' by the birds. At Lake Kereta South, a noisy confrontation between an Australian Little

Grebe and a pair of Dabchicks added spice to the first view of this recent immigrant for most of us. In spite of the rough weather, we also saw 4 Bitterns and 2 broods of Dabchicks on the 2 lakes.

During Labour Weekend a few members and visitors from other regions 'christened' the new accommodation wing at the Miranda Naturalists' Trust Centre. Three Terek Sandpipers at Access Bay were the highlight of the weekend.

Beach patrols have continued, with a wreck of prions continuing into late August and of Blue Petrels into late October.

We have been lucky in having good speakers for our evening meetings. In September, John Dyer, field officer for the Auckland Fish & Game Council, told us about the work of the Council in our area. October brought Kathy Barrow and Nan Rothwell to delight us with their story of 2 working weeks on St Kilda, home of the world's largest Gannet colony. Their slides and photos of island life and the towering seabird cliffs were excellent. In November, Ian McFadden, rat extermination expert with the Department of Conservation, told us about his work with the NZ Pigeon study at Wenderholm. Sadly, this year all 15 nests under observation have failed; a poison drop for ship rats and other predators is planned for next year. Ian also gave us an update on DoC's work on some of the offshore islands, where success in predator control is most encouraging.

(Anthea Goodwin)

### Waikato

Members recently visited 2 contrasting habitats, both typical of the Waikato. The September field trip to Glen Massey, organised by Pam Bovill, was to observe birds of open farmland with emphasis on the introduced finches. Folkert Nieuwland, with slides and tapes, identified these in a preliminary indoor session before we set out. Wet and windy conditions were not ideal either for birds or observers, but the 5 common finch species were seen in small numbers. True country hospitality from the Bovills was much appreciated by us all.

The October field trip was to 2 of the region's wetlands, the Kopuatai Swamp and the Torohape Peat Dome, under the expert guidance of Gerry Kessels. Four Bitterns were seen in flight and others were heard booming. Fernbirds were enticed into the open by taped calls.

The birds of the Cook Islands provided much interest in a talk by Michael Taylor in September. Though Indian Mynas are the most conspicuous species, birds such as the Pacific Fruit Dove, Rarotongan Starling, and Kakerori can also be seen. At the October meeting, Phil Thomson gave us a comprehensive update on endangered

species, covering not only birds, but also frogs, geckos and the newly discovered Tusk Weta. Tiny transmitters on the latter show that they use burrows for shelter and climb to the tree tops to feed on insects.

Under the leadership of Ian Reid, a successful survey of Grey-faced Petrels has been undertaken at Mount Maunganui during the current breeding season. Graeme Taylor and Alan Tennyson started us on the project, which has now mapped all the burrows and banded over 60 birds. One of the birds was found to have been banded by Mike Imber on Whale Island in December 1980.

Beach patrollers have had a busy winter with large numbers of prions coming ashore. Blue Petrel numbers were higher than average, and 3 Brown Skuas were unusual for our coast.

(Stella Rowe)

### Volcanic Plateau

New RR Cathy Jones, ably assisted by Martin Day and Keith Owen, is now organising the activities of the Society in the region. A field trip to Sulphur Bay, Lake Rotorua, was held in September to look for Scaup, Dabchick, Little Black Shag and Little Shag among other birds. Then in November, members were invited to assist in the summer wader counts in the Bay of Plenty. We look forward to reports on these activities.

### Hawkes Bay

In August, a half-day field trip was a visit to Muddy Creek and the Tukituki Estuary with a Little Egret and a White Heron being among the birds recorded. A dozen Spotted Shags were roosting on the sewer outfall, but as it was high tide there was not much else to see at the Tukituki Estuary - just a few godwits, 2 Gannets, 4 Banded Dotterels, and some Black-backed Gulls.

The September field trip was to Monckton's Reserve and then on to A'Dean's Bush in central Hawkes Bay. At Monckton's Bush birds seen included Fantails, Grey Warblers, Tuis, NZ Pigeons, and Chaffinches. Few birds were seen at A'Dean's Bush.

At Labour Weekend, 9 members travelled to Gisborne to help local members and DoC staff complete a coastal survey from Muriwai to East Cape. We covered from Muriwai to Pouawa on Friday and found 2 NZ Dotterels at Muriwai. On Saturday we travelled to Tokomaru Bay and among the birds seen were nesting colonies of Pied Shags, 1 Reef Heron, several godwits, White-fronted Terns, and Black-backed Gulls. There was a pair of NZ Dotterels at Pouawa, and another pair with a 3-egg clutch at Waihua Beach. A single NZ Dotterel was seen at a beach

north of Anaro Bay. A very enjoyable weekend was had by all those who participated.

A proposed survey of Black-backed Gull colonies on the Ngaruroro River on 2/11 was cancelled because heavy rain earlier in the week made the river unsuitable to cross.

(Christine McRae)

### Wairarapa

An evening meeting with Hugh Robertson on the subject of Kapiti Island and its birds preceded trips there by local members of OSNZ and Forest & Bird during 2 weekends in September. The birds performed superbly with Kakas, Saddlebacks, Stitchbirds, Takahe, Robins, and Wekas among those appearing in a well rehearsed manner.

At another evening meeting a very informative and well illustrated update on the Kakapo project was given by Ralph Powlesland.

Recently, Colin Scadden organised an 8-day minibus tour of the West Coast taking in among other places the White Heron colony at Okarito, Westland Black Petrel colony, Cape Foulwind seal colony, and Wairau Lagoons.

Pied Stilt banding is not as successful this year as in previous years with only 7 adults banded to date.

(Tenick Dennison)

### Wellington

Our offshore islands expeditions continued in October with trips to Kapiti and Mana Islands. Four members enjoyed 2 fine but breezy days on Man Island during the weekend of 19-20 October, when 4 count lines were each covered 4 times. Preliminary results show that the birdlife on Mana is steadily increasing. Since the mice were eradicated, it is interesting to note that the numbers of Pukekos have risen rapidly from 0 to 50 birds!

The Kapiti trip took place over the weekend of 12-13 October, when 9 members braved the wind and rain to complete the counts. The numbers of many species had increased, but surprisingly for the time of year we heard no Long-tailed Cuckoos and few of the recently released Stitchbirds were seen or heard.

Evening meetings have produced the usual range of interesting and informative topics. Ralph Powlesland spoke about the supplementary feeding of Kakapo on Little Barrier Island. Special feeding trays have been introduced slowly and in a subtle way in order not to frighten the birds. To keep them rat-proof, the trays have a lid which the birds must learn to open! The positive results of the supplementary feeding are revealed in the breeding activities of the birds, with 4 birds nesting and 2 chicks

raised to date.

In October we had 3 speakers. First was Kerry Oates, with an account of his Blue Duck project on the Manganuiateao River in the central North Island. After methodically plotting every pool and riffle along the stretch of river chosen for the study, Kerry has regularly recorded all observations of the birds, their habits and their behaviour. Maud Island, in the Marlborough Sounds, was the focus of Brian Bell's talk about the installation of nest boxes for Rifleman. At least 6 of the 46 boxes installed in August were occupied. Finally, Phil Millener gave us a fascinating account of the discovery and research on a new shearwater found on the Chatham Islands. The bird was examined alive on South East Island, but was later recovered dead from the beach. No one seems to know where it has come from or what it is. Phil has 40 pages of notes on differences between it and other shearwaters and identification is still a matter for discussion.

At our November meeting Ralph Powlesland updated us on the Society's Beach Patrol Scheme, which has records going back many years. New Zealand is one of the most beach patrolled countries in the world, with 100 000 kms covered and 250 000 birds recovered over the past 30 years. Ralph emphasised the importance of the information that can be gathered this way, including information on offshore species, specimens for study, and the opportunities for members to increase their identification skills. Ralph was followed by Hugh Robertson, who spoke to us about the Nest Record Scheme. Since 1950 23 000 cards have been contributed, with about 45 members participating each year. Hugh gave us some pointers to successful nesting. Both these talks are being followed up with field trips, when members will be given the opportunity to learn the finer points of beach patrolling and seeking nests.

(Ros Batcheler)

### Nelson

Once again Nelson members are counting nests - Gannets, gulls and terns on Farewell Spit; shags, Variable Oystercatchers, gulls and terns on the Nelson Boulder Bank and various islands in the Waimea Estuary. This is the 12th consecutive year that the nests on the Boulder Bank have been counted and we still have some of our original counters.

We have also been banding Pied Stilts. Having given up on adults, as they take too long to return to the nest, we do have a little more success with chicks.

(Jenny Hawkins)

### Canterbury

Our Silvereye banding project has ended for this year and now we are assessing the results. A few sightings of colour banded birds continue to be reported, so it's obvious that not all of the Silvereyes which remain in Christchurch over winter come from out of town.

Evening meetings have been presented with a wide range of topics. In September, Paul Sagar reviewed some of the results of the first 6 years of the National Wader Counts, explained why these are of interest to national and international conservation agencies, and outlined plans for the future of the project. At the October meeting, Don Hadden presented a very well illustrated and informative talk about the birds of Bougainville. With the current troubles on the island, ornithologists are unlikely to have the opportunity to view the amazing birdlife, so we felt privileged to at least have the opportunity to learn something of it via Don's experiences. The November meeting was treated to a variety of oceanic birds, when Amanda Freeman gave a very interesting talk about some of the seabirds she recorded during her time as a fisheries observer on overseas fishing vessels in NZ waters.

(Paul Sagar)

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