

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. 63

June, 1992

Note Deadline for the September issue will be
20th August.

Search for Taiko burrows

Over three weeks from 14 January 1992, a team of six Department of Conservation (DoC) staff and volunteer Kina Scollay, funded by the Canterbury Conservancy of DoC, went bush in the south-west of Chatham Island. Their objective – to search for further burrows of Taiko *Pterodroma magentae*, around the five known active burrows and in adjacent country of similar topography. Operating from two bush camps, and enduring typical changeable weather with frequently wet undergrowth, they stuck to it daily throughout. Walking or crawling abreast, 2-4 m apart, red-taping each end of the line, they worked back and forth over all likely terrain. Aerial photographs and a stereo-viewer were used to select search areas away from the known burrows. Those burrows' form, and the judgment of Graeme Taylor and I, were used to dismiss the innumerable holes found, most of which were used by possums.

At the finish they had covered all intended areas – the upper Tuku catchment, in the triangle bounded by the Tuku River, the clears and the next downstream tributary to Taiko Stream; North Taiko Hill and adjacent hills, ridges and headlands; and some inland sites behind North Taiko Hill. Many of these places had already been searched, but with fewer people and less methodically.

No further breeding burrows of Taiko were found, though an apparently new burrow (perhaps recently dug or opened) was found in the No. 1 burrow area. In that area there now are one breeding burrow, one well used pre-breeding burrow, one disused burrow possibly being prospected, the new burrow, and two other incomplete burrows that Taiko may be visiting.

There must now be increasing doubt whether burrows elsewhere will be found, if indeed they exist. The on-going searches since 1978, by Taiko Expeditions, the Wildlife Service and, latterly, DoC, have now covered the Tuku catchment, the south coast, North Taiko Hill and adjacent ridges, and some of the interior's best sites. The 1987 telemetry operation placed transmitters on 10 Taiko, a significant proportion of the population by any estimates, and all bearings identified in that operation, both of birds that landed and those that only flew around, have been thoroughly searched and burrows found.

Therefore it becomes more urgent to ensure protection of known sites. The current predator control operations by DoC's Chatham Island Field Centre are excellent, with benefits for Chatham I. Pigeon as well as Taiko. However, some predator fencing could now be considered, without concern that there might be better Taiko breeding sites to be found.

On the positive side, the three breeding burrows were being regularly visited and up to three chicks may fledge this year. Two other burrows are now being used so regularly that breeding is imminent. There are signs (scattered feathers, the new burrow) of other Taiko prospecting nearby. Thus non-breeding Taiko are being drawn into the active sites.

Of the 49 Taiko banded (since 1978), allowing 4% mortality per year, 36 may still live. There is an unknown number, probably small, of unbanded birds. Those active at the breeding sites, and their offspring still at sea, account for only about 20. The balance of possibly 20-30 non-breeders could be encouraged into one of the present breeding sites using playback of vocalisations, as has proved successful

in the Galapagos Islands. However, it would be unwise to do this before predator-proof fencing of the site.

MIKE IMBER

P.S. From 21 to 25 April 1992, Mike Imber checked the three breeding burrows. Again, the main burrow on North Taiko Hill produced a fledgling of good weight (513 g on 23 April), which flew about 30 April. Unfortunately, the two southern burrows both failed again, for the 5th year in succession; apparently, both chicks dying when quite young. DoC is considering monitoring one or both of these burrows very closely in future.



View of the habitat near Taiko Stream burrows; the tree ferns are 2-3m high, the *Dracophyllum* trees about 8m.

(Photo. M. Imber)

AGM & Conference – Masterton

This year's AGM was hosted by the Wairarapa branch, the Society's fastest growing region. By Friday evening a very ordinary college dining room sported an illuminated collection of slides, photos of paddocks around Lake Wairarapa, a collection of beach-wrecked albatrosses and petrels (Dave Sim's skins and mounts – not the usual smelly tideline corpses), and tables full of books, t-shirts, cards and specially bottled conference wine. While the Regional Representatives meeting conferred on the logistics of wader counting amidst a hail of duckshot (and other less life threatening activities I'm sure), late arrivals were busily shuffling around the dormitories, surreptitiously trying to find out if their neighbours snored.

No casualties were noted on Saturday morning. An attempt to form a breakaway group to nip over to the Manawatu to study some small brownish, broad-billed duck or other was quickly thwarted and the buses headed off to the National Wildlife Centre at Mt Bruce. We were guided backstage to see the breeding pens of Black Stilts, Auckland & Campbell Island Teal, Blue Duck and Shore Plover. We stood in front of the incubator where a keen worker stayed up all night to watch and videotape the emergence of a kiwi from its egg, and were initiated into the secrets of cooking for kiwis.

The latest additions to Mt Bruce are a dozen or so Shore Plovers, hatched in the incubators. They are housed in some older aviaries surrounded, at some distance, by an imposing array of electric fences to deter predators. Cautious birdwatchers lined up along the defences to catch a fleeting glimpse of the plovers, well aware that their dangling binoculars were excellent conductors of electricity. Increasingly attenuated groups ambled around the bush tracks to view the impressive new Kokako breeding aviary and to hear of the trials and tribulations, and successes, of breeding captive Stitchbirds, Kokako, Kakariki and Kaka. In the darkness of the nocturnal house we lost another 10 ornithologists, but somehow they all re-appeared for a leisurely lunch on the lawn. They must have been distracted by the social matings of the Black Stilts or the family interactions of the Whitehead flocks.

Colin Scadden started the "serious" afternoon session with an account of the rise and fall of the Caspian Tern colony on Onoke Spit. The birds have to cope with sandstorms that can blast the paint off a tractor in half an hour. Not a lot could be done about the weather, but temporary fences have helped to combat human disturbance. Matthew Wong followed with some results from the passerine banding in local orchards, precisely explaining the problems amateurs face with study design – "some of us have to work". Another junior member, Shane Wilkinson, fresh

from a morning's pig hunting (not at Mt Bruce), told us of the Great Wairarapa Twitchathon – the deserved illness of those who tried to cheat by going to sea and the somewhat dubious techniques employed to flush a Bittern in the dying stages of the race. Hugh Robertson (who happens to be the leading Twitchathoner in New Zealand) then showed how a good series of bird counts at Lake Wairarapa contributed to an agreement between farmers, conservationists and recreational interests on the management of lake levels. Tim Harrington, from the local Department of Conservation office, explained the history of Lake Wairarapa and the politics of management in the face of so many, apparently conflicting, interests. The agreement and goodwill that resulted are very encouraging.

Clutching their cakes and cups of coffee, the delegates assembled for the AGM. The President, Brian Bell, was re-elected and Beth Brown received the Falla Memorial Award for her contributions to the Society. Brian Bell announced an increase in the pitiful allowance to Regional Representatives and a per capita grant of \$2 to the regions, mainly to assist with the fieldwork involved in national projects. General business was uncharacteristically controversial. Folkert Nieuwland read out a letter on the style and content of *Notornis*. It suggested that the "scientific" content of the journal should be replaced by popular articles and that the format be "updated". Scientists and birdwatchers clashed briefly to the sounds of cooking in the kitchen and the word "glossy" took on a multitude of derogatory and complimentary meanings. The meeting eventually decided to form a committee.

The conference programme shows a "social half hour" before the dinner and wine tasting. Apparently, in days gone by, when the Society was perhaps a little more august, this was the time when the delegates dressed for dinner. On the whole, the clothes seemed remarkably similar, that Saturday night, to those worn in the bush at Mt Bruce.

The AGM dissolved into wine tasting in a very informal fashion. Each dining table had three bottles of wine tastefully wrapped in numbered brown paper bags. Extremely dubious tactics were employed to answer Colin Scadden's esoteric questions about sauternes, sauvignons, blancs, rouges and obscure vineyards in the Wairarapa. Some tables even resorted to flicking corks and saturated missiles at their rivals to distract them from their deliberations - or maybe they were just jealous of the chap who had seen some little brownish chestnut sandpiper at the Manawatu. The winning table, the wine connoisseurs of the OSNZ, included (suspiciously, some thought) the President, two regional representatives, and a lawyer acting purely in an advisory capacity. Members were divided on the advisability of having the

wine tasting before future AGMs.

When Tom Harty, the first celebrity auctioneer, took the stage to auction off the books, it soon became apparent that the wine tasting had been a clever ploy by the master salesman, Tenick Dennison, to empty every cheque book in the hall. Classic volumes by Guthrie-Smith were offered alongside pocket guides to the birds of British hedge and stream that ensured every young bird watcher would spend years sorting out a Dunnock from a House Sparrow and bow down to the wisdom of their elders until they were well into their 60s. The Secretary revealed a determination to expand her library that amazed everyone – until they suspected some illegal collusion with the auctioneers. The wine lightened the cheque books by well over \$1000, which will go towards the completion of the slide library.

Several casualties were left behind on the Sunday morning as the buses headed off to a mist-netting session, Henley Ponds and the local sewage pond – sorry – Homebush Oxidation Ponds.

Orchards are ideal places to mist net – nice neat straight rows of trees, ideally spaced to set up a net between them – no nasty gorse or nettles and a ready supply of apples to snack on if the netting is a bit slow. A dozen or so thrushes, finches and Silvereyes provided good practice for budding banders. With a bit of luck, the Central Passerine Banders will be joined by northern and southern groups and we might find out where Matthew Wong's Greenfinches really go. Henley Ponds are a marvellous example of a newly managed wetland. Controlled water levels provide muddy margins for waders and islands for breeding Black-billed Gulls and Pied Stilts. Shags feed on introduced perch and a pair of pinioned NZ Scaup quickly attracted a wild breeding population.

After the Conference finished on Sunday afternoon, several carloads of twitchy birdwatchers, known to be bound for Wellington, were seen heading northwards out of Masterton. Later, they were spotted wandering disconsolately along a Manawatu estuary in the fading light, no doubt studying the roosting habits of colour-banded Royal Spoonbills.

Congratulations to Tenick Dennison and team for a very entertaining conference. Brian Boeson dealt with the registration; Jack Lutterel organised the book auction (and the water level at Henley Ponds); Noeline Hussey ensured food and caffeine arrived in quantity at suitably brief intervals; Colin Scadden seemed to be everywhere and closely associated with the wine; and Betty Watt ran the shop and dealt with all the finances. Many thanks to everyone else who worked to ensure over 100 ornithologists and birdwatchers enjoyed the weekend.

How are South Aucklanders going to follow the wine tasting next year?

DEREK ONLEY

The fourth Forktail/Leica Award

The Oriental Bird Club, in conjunction with Leica Camera in the UK the distributors of the world famous Leica binoculars and cameras, is pleased to announce the fourth Forktail/Leica Award. This award is given to the best project fitting one of the following categories:

1. A habitat survey useful to bird conservation.
2. A survey or study of a globally threatened bird species.
3. A study of a little known protected area.
4. Conservation education with an emphasis on birds.

The award is worth £1,000 and the recipient will be announced at the club's AGM in early December 1992. The closing date for submissions is 1 October 1992.

Submissions should consist of a description of the aims of the project, the methods to be employed, and some background as to the project's significance.

The 1991 winner of the award is Madhusudan Katti who is studying bird diversity in Arunchal Pradesh, India.

As the award concerns bird conservation in the Orient applications from nationals working in countries in the region are particularly encouraged.

For further information about the award or for advice in developing a project contact Carol Inskipp, Conservation Officer, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, United Kingdom, to whom applications should be sent.

1992 Subscriptions

Thank you to all those members who paid their subscriptions early. It makes my job, and that of the Back Numbers Convener, a lot easier to have them arrive at least by the beginning of March so that labels can be printed and posted to Te Rau Press in good time for posting your *Notornis*.

HAZEL HARTY
Membership Secretary

Donations to the Society

Donations to the Society for the first quarter of 1992 were very pleasing and have been directed to each specific project, as requested by donors.

Council is grateful to the following members who made donations to the Society.

Marion Aubrey, David Baker, Judith Beirne, Robert Berry, J.M.C. Boag, W.F. Bowden, G.R. Brown, R.S. Carmichael, W.F. Cash, G.S. Clark, Paul Cuming, J.F. Davidson, Barbara Dingle, Noel Doughty, C.P. Eddington, Patricia Evans, B.M. Fitzgerald, Lady M.A. Fleming, C.J. Foreman, D.M. Graham, Mike & Sharon Graham, Peter Grant, Colin Hill, Phyllis Hollay, Graham I. Hunt, John Innes, J.R. Jackson, Dr E.J. Kirk, Paddy Latham, Stewart Lauder, Betty I Loader, J.W. Lock,

T.G. Lovegrove, Dr M.B. Mackereth, Rosemary Messenger, Dr P.L. Munns, Marie Neverman, Jenny Nicol, Malcolm Olsen, Mike Susan & Allannah Paterson, P.F. Penny, N.L. Pickett, Dr Hugh Robertson, P. Rowley, Paul & Joy Sagar, Lorna Simpkin, M.M. Simpson, Ian Southey, Margaret Speirs, Claire Taggart, Graeme & Sandy Taylor, Mona I Taylor, Kathleen Todd, M.A. Waller, Kerry Walshe, Dr W.A. Watters, G.W. Wells, Tony Wills.

HAZEL HARTY
Membership Secretary

New members

As the President mentioned in his last report (*OSNZ news* 62), there was a steady growth in our membership during 1991. In the first quarter of 1992 there has also been a pleasing number of new members, and of others rejoining. We welcome you all.

Hilary Aikman, Mike Aviss, M.H. Ayling, David Barker, Louise Bell, Don Carley, Jackie Carr, David Cormick, Andy Cox, Bill Cox, Pascall Craw, Brian Dickins, Gael Dickins, Noel A. Doughty, John Fausch, John Galilee, A. Geramia, Dr L.G. Greenfield, Colin G. Hill, David Hunter, ICBP, Ken Jacobson, Fred A. Jolly, M.K. Jones, Joanne Kerr, Priscilla McAllum, Janet McCallum, Sonia Molloy, Jennifer Nicol, R.J. Norton, Otto Harrasowik Publishers, June Palmer, Mike, Susan & Allannah Paterson, T. Piersma, San Diego Zoo Library, Stephen Samson, Gary Lloyd Sefton, W.B. Shaw, T.G. Short, Prof. P.D.G. Skegg, G.L. Sligo, Margaret Speirs, Jim Skinner, Dr Kim Sterchy, R.J. Talbot, Claire Taggart, Steven A. Trewick, Sue Triggs, Sally Truman, R.A. Van Heyst, Geoff., Suzanne & Shame Wilkinson, G.S. Williams, Tony Wills, J.A. Woon, Lesley Woudberg.

HAZEL HARTY
Membership Secretary

Wanted – Secretary, Rare Birds Committee

Because Rob Guest, the current Secretary of the Rare Birds Committee, is taking a job overseas Council seeks a volunteer for the position of Secretary for this important committee. The job entails assessing the reports received, circulating those which require the attention of the Rare Birds Committee, providing feedback of the Committee's comments to observers, and preparing an annual report for publication in *Notornis*. Because the Secretary provides the first vetting of submitted reports, a good knowledge of bird identification procedures is desirable.

If you are interested in applying for the position, please contact the Secretary, OSNZ, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington, by 31 July 1992. A detailed job description for the position is also available from the Secretary.

CSN – a reminder

The deadline for material to be in the hands of the island collators is 31 August, anything received later will be held over until next year.

In the first instance members should send their material to the appropriate Regional Recorder, who is responsible for collating the region's contribution. In order to have time to complete this task, Regional Recorders need to receive members' contributions by 31 July.

The CSN year runs from 1 July to 30 June, so now is the time to extract all those observations from your notebooks. To assist with the process, below is a list of the Regional Recorders to whom the appropriate observations should be sent.

Far North & Northland: Terry Toohill, 3 Taraire Crescent, Whangarei. Ph. (09) 437-5167.

Auckland: Michael Taylor, 28A Awarua Crescent, Orakei, Auckland. Ph. (09) 524-9234.

South Auckland: Vacant

Waikato: David Riddell, Gordonton Road, RD1, Taupiri. Ph. (07) 824-3877.

Bay of Plenty: Paddy Latham, 72 Simpson Road, Papamoa. Ph. (07) 542-0406.

Volcanic Plateau: Keith Owen, c/o DoC, P.O. Box 1146, Rotorua. Ph. (07) 347-9179 (work).

Gisborne/Wairoa: Geoff. Foreman, 6 Rimu Drive, Wairoa. Ph. (06) 838-8370.

Taranaki: Erika Woodger, Egmont Road, No.6 RD, Inglewood. Ph. (06) 752-2524.

Manawatu: Sybil Cresswell, 98 Manawatu Road, Palmerston North. Ph. (06) 357-5271.

Wanganui: Tom Teasdale, 33 Paterson Street, Wanganui. Ph. (06) 343-9992

Hawkes Bay: Mary Craven, cnr Havelock & Norton Roads, Hastings. Ph. (06) 878-7583.

Wairarapa: Tenick Dennison, 129 Renall Street, Masterton. Ph. (06) 377-5200.

Wellington: Don Stracy, 14 Fitzwilliam Terrace, Tawa. Ph. (4) 232-7989.

Nelson: Gail Quayle, 6 Tresillian Avenue, Nelson. Ph. (03) 545-0456.

Marlborough: Bev North, P.O. Box 341, Blenheim. Ph. (03) 578-8585.

West Coast: Stewart Lauder, 9 Winnie Street, Greymouth. Ph. (03) 738-0535.

Canterbury: Andrew Crossland, 46 Frensham Crescent, Christchurch 6. Ph. (03) 893-964.

Otago: Alun Baines, 41 Marion Street, MacAndrew Bay, Dunedin. Ph. (03) 476-1022.

Southland: Roger Sutton, 16 Vogel Street, Invercargill. Ph. (03) 215-7810.

For Sale

The Nelson Region is selling OSNZ lapel badges. These badges are coloured enamelled metal slightly smaller than a 10-cent piece, and fastened with a safety catch pin. They depict the *Notornis* emblem on a white background with OSNZ underneath.

Lapel badges in resined and unresined finishes are available.

The badges can be obtained from Jenny Hawkins, 772 Atawhai Drive, Nelson for \$5.50 posted.

(These are nice, well-manufactured & designed badges. The first batch sold out at the AGM in Masterton. Ed.)

Reporting of rare birds

The rare birds reporting system has been reviewed and a new procedure is being introduced. Under the new system, the national and local lists of rarities are being replaced by a single list of national rarities. The single list, which has been produced by the Rare Birds Committee (RBC), is given below.

The basis of the new system is that all rare birds are reported to the RBC, irrespective of how easy they are to identify. This change has been precipitated by the failure of the local rarity system and the need to have good information on all rare birds when projects which rely on this information (e.g. the *Checklist*) are undertaken. Please note, however, that the RBC will continue to provide opinions on any sighting on request, whether or not the species is officially designated as a rare bird.

The system will continue to rely on members filling out the Unusual Bird Report form. The information from this reporting will not only allow us to build a better picture of the status of our rare birds, but may also allow a better understanding of the plumage phases and variation in these rare species.

As I am due to relinquish my position this year, members and RRs should now address all correspondence to the RBC Secretary through the Society's address (PO Box 12397, Wellington), and not to my private address as has previously been the case.

OSNZ Rare Birds Committee

– list of species to be considered and recorded by the Committee

Little Spotted Kiwi (except Kapiti) Great Crested Grebe (North Island) NZ Dabchick (South Island) Hoary-headed Grebe Eastern Little Grebe (except Northland) Black-footed Albatross Yellow-nosed Mollymawk (except Northland & BoP) North Atlantic Shearwater Pink-footed Shearwater Christmas Island Shearwater Manx Shearwater South Georgian Diving Petrel (except Codfish I.) Tahiti Petrel Snow Petrel Antarctic Petrel Fulmar Prion Stejneger's Petrel Pycroft's Petrel Gould's Petrel Chatham Petrel White-naped Petrel Juan Fernandez Petrel Phoenix Petrel Kermadec Petrel (except Kermadecs) Providence Petrel Chatham Taiko Soft-plumaged Petrel (except Antipodes) Leach's Storm Petrel White-bellied Storm Petrel Emperor Penguin King Penguin (except Campbell Is) Gentoo Penguin Adelie Penguin Chinstrap Penguin Rockhopper Penguin (mainland NZ) Macaroni Penguin Erect Crested Penguin (mainland NZ) Magellanic Penguin Red-tailed Tropicbird (except Kermadecs) White-tailed Tropicbird Australian Pelican Brown Booby Masked Booby (except Kermadecs) NZ King Shag (except Marlborough Sounds) Chatham I. Shag (except Chatham Is) Bounty I. Shag (except Bounty Is) Auckland I. Shag (except Auckland I.) Campbell I. Shag (except Campbell Is) Macquarie I. Shag (except Macquarie Is) Pitt I. Shag (except Chatham Is) Lesser Frigatebird White-necked Heron Intermediate Egret Nankeen Night Heron NZ Little Bittern Australian Little Bittern White Ibis Yellow-billed Spoonbill Plumed Whistling Duck Australian Wood Duck Brown Teal (south of Great Barrier, not Kapiti) Chestnut Teal Northern Shoveler White-eyed Duck Pink-eared Duck Blue-billed Duck Nankeen Kestrel Black Falcon Bobwhite Quail Red-legged Partridge Grey Partridge Auckland I. Rail (except Adams I.) Black-tailed Native Hen Dusky Moorhen Takahe (except Fiordland & islands where introduced) Brolga Painted Snipe Black Stilt (except Waitaki & Kawhia, Kaipara & Tauranga) Australian Red-necked Avocet Oriental Pratincole Red-capped Dotterel Ringed Plover Oriental Dotterel Red-kneed Dotterel Shore Plover (except SE Island) American Golden Plover Grey Plover NZ Snipe (except Auckland Is, Snares & Antipodes) Chatham I. Snipe (except Chatham Is) Japanese Snipe Great Knot Sanderling Dunlin Baird's Sandpiper White-rumped Sandpiper Western Sandpiper Broad-billed Sandpiper Ruff Asiatic Dowitcher Little Whimbrel Bristle-thighed Curlew Hudsonian Godwit Upland Sandpiper Common Sandpiper Marsh Sandpiper Lesser Yellowlegs Grey Phalarope Red-necked Phalarope Wilson's Phalarope Brown Skua (north of Otago Peninsula) South Polar Skua Pomarine

Skua Long-tailed Skua Whiskered Tern White-winged Black Tern Gull-billed Tern Sooty Tern (except Kermadecs) Antarctic Tern (except subantarctic islands & Stewart I.) Fairy Tern (except Northland) Arctic Tern Crested Tern Common Tern Bridled Tern Common Noddy Lesser Noddy Grey Ternlet (except Kermadecs) White Tern Barbary Dove (South I.) Spotted Dove (except Auckland & BoP) Kakapo (except Stewart I. and islands where introduced) Crimson Rosella (except Wellington) Red-crowned Parakeet (on mainland except Northland) Oriental Cuckoo Pallid Cuckoo Fan-tailed Cuckoo Channel-billed Cuckoo Barn Owl Spine-tailed Swift Fork-tailed Swift Kookaburra (except north of Auckland city) Eastern Broad-billed Roller Bush Wren Australian Tree Martin Fairy Martin Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike Australian White-winged Triller Red-vented Bulbul Yellowhead (except Fiordland & Arthurs Pass) Satin Flycatcher Black Robin (except SE & Mangere Is) Stitchbird (except Little Barrier & Kapiti Is) Red Wattlebird Girl Bunting (except eastern South I.) Kokako (south of Taranaki) Saddleback (mainland only) Masked Woodswallow White-browed Woodswallow

ROB GUEST

Hon. Secretary, Rare Birds Committee

Serventy medal awarded to Dr John Warham

At its AGM, held in Sydney on 23 May 1992, the RAOU announced that the recipient of the 1992 Serventy medal was Dr John Warham.

Members of OSNZ congratulate John upon this recognition of the outstanding research in ornithology that he has undertaken over many years.

Mystery Bird # 7

Last issue's long billed, long legged mystery bird can only belong to the Family Ardeidae, which includes the herons, ibises and spoonbills, or the Suborder Charadrii – the waders.

The long, thin, markedly down-curved bill excludes the herons, bitterns, spoonbills, oystercatchers, plovers, phalaropes, stilts, avocets, and pratincoles. This leaves the ibis Subfamily Threskiornithinae and the Family Scolopacidae – the snipe, sandpipers, godwits and curlews.



Out of these groups, the only ones that have such a markedly down-curved bill are ibises, whimbrels, large curlews, and some of the smaller sandpipers, especially Broad-billed and Curlew Sandpipers and Dunlin. Most of these waders can be eliminated from contention because of their body proportions. The legs and neck of the mystery bird are, relative to the body, much longer than those of whimbrels, the Little Curlew, the Bristle-thighed Curlew and all of the sandpipers listed above. The only wader that has roughly the same proportions to the mystery bird is the Eastern Curlew. However, the plumage of the mystery bird is uniformly dark – quite unlike any wader in the Family Scolopacidae. The Eastern Curlew's remarkable bill, up to 20 cm long, also eliminates this species from contention.

This leaves the ibises. The only ibis species recorded in New Zealand are the Australian White and the Glossy Ibis. Therefore, the dark plumaged Mystery Bird #7 can only be a Glossy Ibis.

The Glossy Ibis occurs in North America, Europe, Africa, and Australia. It is a rare but regular visitor to New Zealand. Recently, small flocks have been reported in Canterbury and Otago.

ALAN TENNYSON



Mystery Bird #8

Identify this bird. Answer next issue.

Beach Patrol Scheme 1991 – preliminary report

This report concerns the results from 603 cards received to 13 April 1992. In 1991, 4272 km were travelled. This distance is similar to the average of 4057 km per year travelled during the period 1971-1990. Dead seabirds found in 1990 totaled 5879. This is many fewer than the average of 10 204 found per year for 1971-1990. Of the coastal regions where greater than 100 km were covered in 1991, Wellington West had the highest rate of recovery at 3.5 birds per km (prion spp., Fairy Prions and Thin-billed Prions in August-September being the main contributors to this rate) and Westland the lowest at 0.03 birds per km!

Unusual finds were a Red-tailed Tropicbird, the seventh for the Scheme. There were larger numbers than usual of four species:

- * 15 Antarctic Petrels – usually none;
- * 201 White-headed Petrels – usually less than 100;
- * 7 Little Black Shags – highest annual total by 2; and
- * 12 Brown Skuas – usually 1 or 2.

The Antarctic Petrels were found mainly on Auckland West and Southland beaches in October. Similarly, the White-headed Petrels were found mainly on Auckland West beaches in October. The Brown Skuas were found in August-September, also mainly on Auckland West beaches.

The following are provisional totals for each region of coast patrolled in 1991.

	Birds	km covered
Auckland East	626	503
Auckland West	2908	1857
Bay of Plenty	219	81
Canterbury North	146	78
Canterbury South	109	62
East Coast N.I.	74	93
North Coast S.I.	29	13
Outlying Islands	8	3
Otago	26	83
Southland	357	133
Taranaki	194	93
Wairarapa	32	29
Westland	15	473
Wellington South	83	56
Wellington West	1053	302
TOTAL	5879	3859

The success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 1991 was due, to a large extent, to the people who organised patrols for groups of members, and to the dedicated patrollers who carried out regular patrols. My thanks to Mary Powlesland for preparing programmes to analyse the data on the OSNZ computer during the past year.

RALPH POWLESLAND
Convener

Nest Record Scheme – report for the year ending 30 April 1991

This year, 70 members and friends contributed 604 Nest Record cards covering 68 species, bringing the grand total to 21 893 cards. Revision of the *Checklist* added one species of snipe, and Little Spotted Kiwi, Black Robin and Kokako were recorded for the first time, bringing the total number of species in the scheme to 142.

There were a moderate number of cards submitted, but a high diversity of species. There were also more contributors than usual, but fewer major contributors. Of particular note were contributions from: Peter Bull (85), Noel Henry (DoC Northland, watching Variable Oystercatcher and NZ Dotterel nests under Richard Parrish's direction) (83), Michael & David Bell (57), Don Hadden (45), Raewyn Empson (35), Bev Elliott (29), and Bill Sloan (22).

29 colonial cards were included in the above total, covering the following 7 species: Royal Spoonbill (2), Pied Stilt (1), Black-backed Gull (9), Red-billed Gull (6), Black-billed Gull (2), Caspian Tern (7), and White-fronted Tern (2). Of particular note were Colin Scadden's observations of the Caspian Tern colony at Lake Onoke Spit - records in the scheme date back to the 1930s.

Several people have asked over the past year when to record fledging success of ground-nesting birds, such as Variable Oystercatcher, whose young leave the nest soon after hatching. For the purposes of the scheme, please record in the breeding success part of the card the number of chicks that leave the nest, not the number that make it to the fully feathered (fledged) stage. However, please continue to record observations of young with their parents if they can definitely be assigned to the nest you have recorded.

I can report some progress on computerising Nest Record Scheme data, because Mary Powlesland has just finished writing and documenting a programme to input nest record data onto the computer. I have not yet started entering data, and we do not yet have a programme to integrate the inputted data with the statistical package we bought to do the analyses.

Information from the Nest Record Scheme has been used by several authors of texts for Volumes 2 & 3 of the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*. The priority will be to get the data for waders onto the computer first so that contributors to the *Handbook* can more easily access the data on hand.

My thanks go to all of the contributors to the scheme and to those who have encouraged members to take part.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS: Lynn Adams, David Baker, Brian, David & Michael Bell, David Bell (snr), Caroline Bos, Peter Bull, Bill Cash, Brian Chudleigh, Rogan Colbourne, Willie Cook, P. Cooke, Peter Dilks, Bev Elliott, Brian Ellis, Raewyn Empson, Mr & Mrs R. Fanhin, Ian Flux, Phil Garside, Brian Gill, Sean Goddard, Tim Grant, Linden, Richard & Rob Guest, Don Hadden, Mike Harding, Hazel Harty, Jenny Hawkins, Henk Heinekamp, Noel Henry, Wayne Hutchinson, Murray Jefferies, Nigel Langham, Paddy Latham, Barry Lawrence, Bruce Mackereth, John

McLennan, Peter McKenzie, Jocelyn McLean, Alex Middleton, Ron Moorhouse, David Mudge, Kerry Oates, Colin Ogle, Penny Packard, Richard Parrish, Justin Penney, Mary & Ralph Powlesland, R. Rothschild, John & Stella Rowe, Hugh Robertson, Paul Sagar, David Sangster, Colin Scadden, Peter Schweigman, Tim Shaw, Roger Slack, Bill Sloan, Jack Taylor, M.I. Taylor, Michael Taylor, Christine Tisdall, Bruce Thomas, Alan & Connie Wright.

LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING 1991/92: Little Spotted Kiwi 2, Great Spotted Kiwi 1, Dabchick 2, Sooty Shearwater 2, Little Blue Penguin 1, Black Shag 1, Pied Shag 1, Little Shag 2, Reef Heron 5, Royal Spoonbill 2, Mute Swan 1, Paradise Shelduck 1, Blue Duck 3, Mallard 4, Harrier 3, Pukeko 4, SI Pied Oystercatcher 4, Variable Oystercatcher 91, Chatham Island Oystercatcher 9, Pied Stilt 22, NZ Dotterel 40, Banded Dotterel 3, Black-fronted Dotterel 2, Shore Plover 12, Wrybill 1, Spur-winged Plover 9, Chatham Island Snipe 2, Brown Skua 2, Black-backed Gull 11, Red-billed Gull 14, Black-billed Gull 3, Black-fronted Tern 5, White-fronted Tern 21, Fairy Tern 4, Caspian Tern 7, NZ Pigeon 11, Red-crowned Parakeet 3, Yellow-crowned Parakeet 2, Morepork 1, Kingfisher 1, Rifleman 7, Skylark 3, Welcome Swallow 16, Pipit 2, Dunnock 5, Blackbird 37, Song Thrush 44, Whitehead 1, Yellowhead 3, Brown Creeper 1, Grey Warbler 1, Fantail 21, Tomtit 25, Black Robin 17, Silvereye 21, Bellbird 1, Tui 2, Yellowhammer 7, Cirl Bunting 1, Chaffinch 3, Greenfinch 26, Goldfinch 22, Redpoll 9, House Sparrow 3, Starling 6, Kokako 1, Saddleback 5.

HUGH ROBERTSON
Convener



RAOU Column

This year will see a number of changes in the RAOU. Our image is being revamped with a new logo to broaden our appeal to everyone, not just ornithologists and the more serious birdwatchers. The Five-year Forward Plan has been approved by Council and various far-reaching objectives are now being implemented. These include a membership drive and the relocation of Headquarters. With 11 people working full-time the converted suburban house that is our head office is now far too small,

although it served its purpose adequately when it was first purchased. A subcommittee has been formed to find suitable new premises with adequate work and storage space and extra room for our growing library and sales activities.

Projects, both old and new, will continue to be a major part of RAOU activities in 1992. Volume 2 of the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds* will be completed on schedule and is due for publication early in 1993. BHP Petroleum purchased the colour plates for the second volume, which will cover raptors, game birds, button quail and waders (excluding the Scolopacidae, gulls, terns and skuas). The Australian Beach Patrol Scheme, modeled on the New Zealand scheme, is up and running and results are starting to come in. Further funding has been obtained from the Federal Government to continue the study into sustainable harvesting of waterbirds in the East Asian Flyway. This collaborative project between the Asian Wetlands Bureau and the RAOU aims to reduce hunting pressure on waterbirds, especially migratory waders, while ensuring adequate livelihoods for poor rural hunters in West Java, South Thailand and East China.

Another new bird has been added to the Australian list. The vagrant Black-headed Gull reported from Broome last October prompted a group of birdwatchers from Melbourne to visit the area. This shameless twitching was amply rewarded by the discovery of a Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) on a football oval near Broome Airport. The birders had stopped to look at a group of Yellow Wagtails when the pipit was seen, although identification took some time as the bird was not in breeding plumage.

DAVID ANDREW

Report of the Banding Liaison Officer - 1991

During the past year I have had six permit applications sent to me from the Banding Officer for my comments. It is good to see permits for passerine and wader banding, especially from OSNZ members, as these are two areas where we can make worthwhile contributions. It is important that New Zealand takes a full part in the work being done internationally with waders.

I wrote to the Banding Officer in June 1991 concerning complaints from members about the quality of mist nets and various other queries raised at the AGM in Blenheim.

Notices have been placed in *OSNZ news* encouraging members to send all observations of all colour banded birds to the Banding Office and not just to the person doing the banding. The increased colour banding being undertaken has

certainly made for more interesting bird watching, as well as showing some interesting movements and other behaviours.

There was no meeting of the Banding Committee this year.

JENNY HAWKINS
Banding Liaison Officer

Annual Report of the Field Investigation Officer: 1991-1992

1. Overview of the Society's major national schemes

The Beach Patrol, Moulting Recording and Nest Record Schemes continue to run with moderate levels of support, usually with most input from a relatively small number of dedicated individuals or groups.

A statistical software package (SYSTAT) has been purchased for analysis of data held in these schemes. The two personal computers for the Beach Patrol and Nest Record Schemes have been working well, but we are currently up-grading the Beach Patrol computer to a larger, faster machine with colour monitor; the old Beach Patrol computer will be used by the editor of *Notornis*. These purchases are covered by a Lottery Board grant to the OSNZ. Beach Patrol data have been transferred to the PC, and the Society has contracted a computer programmer to prepare a programme to allow the input of Nest Record Scheme data onto the PC.

2. Review of the Society's special national studies

Wader census

The biannual national wader census generally continues to operate well. Counts had been drifting away from the standard time in some regions, but at the last meeting of Regional Representatives there was a commitment to do these counts over a 4-5 week period.

Paul Sagar has published the 1990 and 1991 results in *OSNZ news*, and has made a start on analysing the data collected over the first six years of the study. New Zealand results are now being fed into international databases on wader numbers in the South East Asia/Oceania region, and data are also being used by authors for Volumes 2 & 3 of the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*.

Cattle Egret

The annual Cattle Egret survey was done in August 1991. For the fourth year in a row the totals were well down on the maximum numbers, but they were similar to those recorded in the previous three years. Moderate flocks appeared in some regions (e.g. Wairarapa) where they had been absent in 1990 – the pattern is still

confusing, so it is still worthwhile OSNZ maintaining a close watch on Cattle Egret numbers.

Banded Dotterel movements

Ray Pierce has now completed a second draft of a paper for *Notornis* on the results of this study. No recent band recoveries have upset his findings.

Black-fronted Dotterel movements

A small number of dedicated people have been putting in considerable efforts to catch and colour-band breeding birds, but they are fairly elusive. Nevertheless, in 1991-92, another 10-20 birds were banded, mainly in the North Island. We have yet to get any long distance movements (maximum is 40 km, from Masterton to Lake Wairarapa). Some very good information on mate retention and site fidelity is starting to emerge from the colour banding.

Pied Stilt movements

This project is going extremely well, with some interesting and most unexpected movements being recorded. Last winter about 70 sightings were made of the 204 birds banded – the most obvious trends were of southern birds heading for Northland and Auckland harbours, and coastal and birds in Canterbury and points further north tending to be relatively sedentary. Some pairs retained their pair bond through the winter, and many birds returned to breed at the same, or a very close colony. However, many banded birds simply disappeared as the colonies were not always fixed. Last spring again some 200 birds were banded, with especially good samples from the Waikato-South Auckland area. Based on the interesting findings to date, and the increasing skill of stilt banders, Ray Pierce has decided to continue the project for at least one more breeding season, with special effort needed in the South Island lowlands.

Passerine movements

The Central Passerine Group ran a series of banding training sessions at Ward, Farewell Spit, Greytown, and Pukepukē Lagoon during the year. A number of banding groups have now been formed through central New Zealand, and the permit has been extended to include Hawkes Bay and Taranaki. The number of birds banded in 1991-92 was a clear record, with 4192 birds of 21 species being marked. Almost half of these birds were banded by Myk Davis in and around Hawera. Despite having banded over 10 000 passerines since 1988, there still have not been any recoveries greater than 15 km from the banding sites – the longest movement to date is of a Goldfinch banded by Matthew Wong north of Greytown which moved 13 km southeast to be caught by Dave Sim. Some useful longevity data are now being collected.

Kereru display dives

The data collection phase of this study ended in June 1990 and the information is now being analysed for a paper to be submitted to *Notornis*.

Royal Spoonbill census

Very good surveys of the country were done on 6/7 July 1991 and on 6 February 1992. In winter, 242 Royal Spoonbills were found, with the main concentrations being in Northland, Auckland, Manawatu, Hawkes Bay, Nelson and Canterbury. Results of this census were published by Peter Schweigman in *OSNZ news* 60. Of the 12 chicks colour banded at Vernon Lagoons, Marlborough, in summers 1989-91, seven were seen through the 1991 winter from Parengarenga Harbour to Farewell Spit, and one other has just been seen at Lake Wairarapa. Unfortunately, not all sightings of colour-banded birds were sent to the Banding Office – this is especially true of the two birds reputed to have been in the Auckland area just before the last AGM – please send ALL sightings of colour-banded birds to the Banding Office, even if you know someone else has seen the same bird. Multiple reports of sightings of the same bird are valuable to determine the time they move around the country – e.g. the Kaituna Cut juvenile spoonbill was seen later at the Waikanae Estuary.

On 6 February 1992, most regions checked likely spots for spoonbills, and a further seven birds were banded this summer at the Vernon Lagoons.

3. Register of OSNZ projects

Inactive – no interest from RRs.

4. Advice on projects

Through the year I have been called upon to give advice on projects being mooted by members, or projects that are nearing the analysis phase.

5. New studies

No new studies have been proposed.

6. Contact with New Zealand organisations

On behalf of OSNZ, I successfully applied to Lottery Science for \$5,000 plus GST for costs associated with publishing the 50-year index to *Notornis*. During the year, I have purchased 18 telescopes, 21 tripods, 27 Pesola spring balances, 6 dial calipers and 9 vernier calipers for research projects on New Zealand birds out of a Lottery Board grant of \$14,000 plus GST. I have also purchased a personal computer for the Editor of *Notornis*.

While buying telescopes for the OSNZ, I arranged a special deal for OSNZ members to purchase telescopes and tripods as part of a bulk discount deal - over 30 members took advantage of this offer.

No-one responded to the advertisement for an organiser of a new Distribution

ANNUAL REPORT OF HONORARY TREASURER TO MEMBERS
FOR THE YEAR 31 DECEMBER 1991

Overall the Balance Sheet reveals a satisfactory position at years end. Restricted funds total \$110,606 and are fully funded with interest bearing investments. The Accumulated Funds represented by the balance of assets increased by \$8,285 or 24% to \$42,641. As the assets include the Library valued at \$1,000 and Sale Stock also conservatively estimated the position can only be considered good.

In respect of Income - subscriptions are showing an upward trend and while Sales have dropped from a very high level in 1990 without major stock purchases and lower general expenses the overall over-expenditure was reduced from \$6,036 to \$1,488. As no charges for administration are made to Restricted Funds, overall the income and expenditure amount is virtually in balance.

Finally Restricted Funds appear satisfactory and the Project Assistance Fund (Note 6 or Page 10) reveals a substantial balance of \$86,892 available and the policy of limiting annual assistance to interest received could be reviewed. This is possible: as while interest rates have dropped Royalties have increased from \$6,231 to \$8,258.

The societies sales have continued to return over \$4,200, advertising has risen to \$1,080, and there is, I feel, scope for opportunity to obtain sponsorship beside grants for new publications and equipment if required.

Since taking over in October I have enjoyed the most willing assistance from all on the Committee, from Brian Bell and Brian Ellis who left the accounts up to date and in excellent order.

Mark Nee

Mark Nee B.Com, A.C.A.

PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUND

Grants authorised but not made at the end of 1991 are as follows:

89.03	H. Robertson	1,000.00	Nest Records
90.01	G. Lovei	107.50	Passerines in Manawatu
90.05	H.G. Robertson	894.00	Central Passerine Group
90.06	B. Bell and C. Taylor	2,000.00	Fluttering Shearwaters
90.07	T. Dennison	550.00	Bird Slide Collection
91.03	H. Robertson and P. Sager	2,000.00	Chatham Island Wader Census
		<u> </u>	
		\$6,551.50	

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

AUDITORS' REPORT

The Members
The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc)

In my opinion the financial statements on pages 3 to 11 fairly represent the financial position of the Society at 31 December 1991 and the results of its activities for the year ended on that date.

Rosalie Chik

Rosalie Chik B.C.A., A.C.A.
Wellington
20 April 1992

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1991

ASSETS	NOTES	\$ 1991	\$ 1990
Current Assets			
Bank of New Zealand -Cheque Account		3111	8038
		150	65000
		-	2258
Funds Held		-	2258
Amounts Owing to the Society	(1)	14760	30652
Interest Withholding Tax	(1)	2289	2289
Short Term investments		113301	32414
Stock of 'Notornis'	(2)	18167	18315
Stock of other sales items	(2)	27878	21041
Good & Services Tax refund owing		-	4194
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>179656</u>	<u>184201</u>
Fixed Assets			
Library at valuation		1000	1000
Computer	3763		
Less provision for depreciation	3384	379	1131
Computers and printers	8305		
Less provision for depreciation	2482	5816	7457
Display at National Wildlife Centre	1311		
Less provision for depreciation	393	918	1049
Display panels for I.O.C.	1000		
Less provision for depreciation	300	700	900
Scales	2700		
Less provision for depreciation	270	2430	
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		<u>11243</u>	<u>11537</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>190899</u>	<u>195738</u>

BALANCE SHEET (continued)
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1991

LIABILITIES, RESTRICTED AND ACCUMULATED FUNDS

	Notes	\$ 1991	\$ 1990
LIABILITIES			
Amounts owed by the Society	(3)	16892	48131
Subscriptions Paid in advance		19827	14584
Goods and Services Tax due		933	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>37652</u>	<u>62715</u>
RESTRICTED FUNDS			
Life Subscriptions Fund	(4)	11,864	12195
Robert Falla Memorial Award Fund	(5)	2674	2493
Projects Assistance Fund	(6)	86892	77144
A.T. Edgar Junior Award Fund	(7)	1736	1618
Publications Reserve	(8)	2207	1846
Charles Fleming Memorial Reserve	(9)	5233	3600
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS		<u>110606</u>	<u>98396</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Balance at beginning of year		34127	26582
Prior year's adjustments - Stock revaluation		-	15400
Stock grant paid		10002	-
G.S.T. overprovided		-	(1819)
Less excess of expenditure over income		<u>44129</u>	<u>40163</u>
		1488	6036
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS		<u>42641</u>	<u>34127</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUNDS		<u>190899</u>	<u>195738</u>

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1991

	\$ 1991	\$ 1990
(a) GENERAL INCOME	1991	1990
Subscriptions - New Zealand	31150	29656
" - Overseas	9717	8392
Transfer from Life Subscriptions Fund	1219	1355
Donations	1231	1764
Profit from Sales:		
Greeting Cards	1628	3191
Notornis Back Numbers	95	1131
Atlases	518	559
Checklist	1612	1626
T-shirts	130	292
Car Stickers	70	65
Index	385	
(less adjustments)	(160)	4278
Sundry Income (1991 Library)	32	1965
Grant from Lottery Grants Board - Computer	-	8285
Advertising	1080	596
TOTAL GENERAL INCOME	<u>48707</u>	<u>58877</u>
(b) INVESTMENT AND OTHER INCOME		
Interest earned by all funds	9686	10897
Royalties on Field Guide to N.Z. Birds	8258	6231
	17944	17128
Less Royalties credited to Projects Ass. Fund	8258	6231
Less interest credited to Restricted Funds	7201	8481
	15459	14712
Total Investment and Other Income retained in Accumulated Funds	2485	2416
TOTAL INCOME	<u>51192</u>	<u>61293</u>

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1991

	\$	\$
(c) GENERAL EXPENDITURE	1991	1990
Printing and Distribution of 'Notornis'	36586	22300
Printing 'OSNZ NEWS'	6557	6221
Printing 50 yr Index to 'Notornis'	-	10827
Printing 'A Flying Start'	-	15376
General Expenses	1393	3234
Printing and Stationery	1338	3655
Travelling Expenses	2010	2746
Regional Representatives' Allowances	302	340
Postage and Tolls	637	119
Flying Start	63	-
Audit	800	800
Depreciation - Computers	2393	1580
- Displays	331	231
- Scales	270	-
TOTAL GENERAL EXPENDITURE	52680	67329
Excess Expenditure over Income transferred to ACCUMULATED FUNDS:	1488	6036

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THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC,

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1991

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 7.28%. 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 and the I.O.C. display are depreciated at 10%, straight line. The Scales are depreciated at 20% per annum straight line.

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THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1991

NOTE 1 AMOUNTS OWING TO THE SOCIETY

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Advance to International Ornithological Congress Committee	10000	10000
Lottery Board grants	-	18305
Sales made by I.O.C.	-	1447
B.N.Z. Interest accrued	-	900
Loan Project Assistance	2000	-
Royalties	1778	-
Advertising	660	-
Sales	322	-
Listed separately in 1990 accounts	14760	30652
Interest Withholding Tax	2289	2289
Total owed 31 December	17049	32941

NOTE 2 STOCKS OF SALE ITEMS

(a) 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 was revalued in 1990 and current production in excess of present membership requirements will be charged to this stock.

(b) Other

These are valued at cost in all cases, except Greeting Cards which are continued at the revaluation applied in 1989.

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Notornis	18167	18315
Greeting Cards	4354	4990
Notornis Back Numbers	10650	722
Atlases	2233	3312
Checklist	4136	5046
T-Shirts	396	727
Car Stickers	1766	1838
Flying Starts	4343	4406
Total Society's Stocks on Hand	46045	39356

NOTE 3 AMOUNTS OWED BY THE SOCIETY

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Te Rau Press Ltd.		
December 'Notornis' and OSNZ NEWS	9541	12703
Random Century Ltd.		
Printing Checklist and 'Flying Start'	-	25986
Projects Assistance grants unpaid	6551	8284
Expense reimbursements	-	271
General Expenses	-	87
Audit Fee accrual	800	800
Total owed 31 December	16892	48131

NOTE 4 LIFE SUBSCRIPTION FUND

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Balance at beginning of year	12195	11443
Life Subscriptions received	-	1067
Interest earned	888	1040
	13083	13550
10% transferred to General Income	1219	1355
Credit Balance at end of year	11864	12195

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NOTE 5 ROBERT FALLA MEMORIAL AWARD FUND

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Balance at beginning of year	2493	2377
Interest earned	181	216
Donations	-	-
	2674	2593
Less Award	-	100
Credit balance at end of year	2674	2493

NOTE 6 PROJECTS ASSISTANCE FUND

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Balance at beginning of year	77144	73069
Royalties on Field Guide	8258	6231
Interest earned	5617	6638
Repayment loan	500	-
Manawatu Forest and Bird	750	-
Loan Outstanding	2000	-
1990 Projects Reversed	9103	-
	103372	85893
Less grants made	6610	8794
Loan	2500	-
Adjustment	819	-
1991 Projects approved	6551	-
Credit balance at end of year	86892	77144

NOTE 7 A. T. EDGAR JUNIOR AWARD FUND

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Balance at beginning of year	1618	1520
Interest earned	118	138
Donations	-	100
	1736	1758
Less Awards	-	140
Credit balance at end of year	1736	1618

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NOTE 8 PUBLICATIONS RESERVE

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Balance at beginning of year	1846	1528
Interest earned	134	139
Donations	315	179
	2295	1846
Less Publication Proposal	88	-
Credit balance at end of year	2207	1846

NOTE 9 FLEMING MEMORIAL FUNDS

	\$	\$
	1991	1990
Balance at beginning of year.	3600	3407
Donations	-	1403
Interest earned	262	310
Legacy and Interest Estate - Sir Charles Fleming	1371	-

Mapping Scheme, but I have had some preliminary discussions with Department of Conservation (DoC) staff who have indicated an interest in jointly repeating the Scheme. I am hoping to hold talks with senior officials from DoC, and also plan to check out the interest of the Department of Survey & Land Information. Advancing this proposal will become a priority, given that we are hoping to start in spring 1994.

7. Contact with overseas organisations

I wrote to the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), offering the assistance of the Society in a new "Biodiversity Project" that SPREP is co-ordinating. Over the next five years there is likely to be a need for ornithological survey and study teams to visit various South Pacific islands. OSNZ is clearly well placed to help as we are the recognised publisher of papers about South Pacific birds, we have a SW Pacific recording scheme in place, and most importantly, many of our members have had bird study or bird watching experience in the South Pacific.

8. Applications for funds from the Projects Assistance Reserve

Grants approved in 1991 were:
 \$ 500 - Robin Fordham; ecology of juvenile Kakerori.
 \$2000 - Hugh Robertson & Paul Sagar; wader censuses, Chatham Island.
 \$ 800 - Maida Barlow; Caspian Tern study.

Note that Council did not receive any complete applications on time to be considered at the October Council meeting and so these are to be considered at the May 1992 meeting, along with any new proposals. The \$2000 for wader censuses on Chatham Island was not called upon in 1991/92 because other financial support was not available from the Lottery Board, and because other commitments prevented the principal applicants from visiting the Chathams in November 1991.

HUGH ROBERTSON
Field Investigation Officer



National Royal Spoonbill census - 6 February 1992

This second census of the Royal Spoonbill population went well bird wise and, as far as the South island was concerned, weather wise too.

The total population of adult and juvenile Royal Spoonbills counted on 6 February 1992 was 333 birds. This total does not include chicks in the nest, which are difficult to see and impossible to count.

The 6 February 1991 count shows a total of 329 birds, but this figure included 31 chicks. Therefore, the figure of 298 adults and juveniles is the one to use in comparison with this year's total - which shows an increase of 35 birds, or 11.7%.

The spoonbills were distributed as follows:

South Auckland	2
Bay of Plenty	3
Manawatu	12
Hawkes Bay	1
Wairarapa	4
Wellington	3
Nelson	8
Marlborough	96
West Coast	30
Canterbury	27
Otago	146
Southland	1
TOTAL	333

It still leaves us with the question of what happened to the missing birds in July last year, when we counted 242. An increase of almost 100 birds is a lot to account for.

Once again, my thanks to all participants, especially those in the north who spent a lot of time for a nil count. By the time you read this you will all have had another go at a winter count.

PETER SCHWEIGMAN

Sites of interest - Waikareao Estuary

If you are familiar with Tauranga you will be aware of the Waikareao Estuary, which lies between Cameron Road and Otumoetai. It is surrounded by industrial and residential property. A walkway is being developed that will wind all the way around the estuary - about 2 hours to walk.

This is a marvelous place for birdwatching. All the introduced birds are there as well as waders, ducks, quail (including 1 Brown Quail at the moment), Pheasants, Hawks, Paradise Shelducks, Fernbirds Tui, Kingfishers, Pukeko and Banded Rails. Spotless Crake are there, but very secretive as usual.

Half of the walkway is completed and in use. It is on the Otumoetai side of the estuary and includes a raised board walk that goes over the mudflats.

I recommend this track to you if you are in Tauranga.

LEN BUCHANAN

Report of the Miranda Banders - 1991/92

During the season, four attempted catches were successful. A total of 1164 birds of 9 species was captured. New additions to the banding list were Terek Sandpiper (1), Red-necked Stint (2), and Curlew Sandpiper (8). The top three species were Wrybill (847), Knot (113), and Bar-tailed Godwit (100). 98 of the birds caught were already banded - 87 of these being Wrybill. Two foreign-banded Knots were caught - both at Jordan's on 22/12/91. One of these had been banded in Victoria 4 months earlier and the other was banded at Kooragang Island, NSW, on 4/12/88. The grand total of birds captured in five seasons stands now at 4060 (more than 50% of which are Knots).

As in the past, effort centred on Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits. This year, some of these species were fitted with a white leg-flag as well as a metal band. This practice will be continued and should yield valuable sightings of our birds elsewhere in NZ, as well as overseas. Other countries are also flagging migrant waders, with each country using a different colour.

In recent years we have become concerned that valuable banding information was being lost because the bands on Wrybills banded at Miranda in 1980 was fast becoming illegible. We estimate that about 5% of the wintering flock of Wrybills wear bands from this era. Accordingly, we decided to make a special effort to catch Wrybills at Miranda toward the end of the season. Our aim was to obtain age data, to reband birds wearing old bands, and to band a significant number of new birds (with the intention of monitoring the population in future years).

Our two attempts to catch Wrybills resulted in 119 birds being caught on 5/4/92 and a further 728 on 21/4/92. 51 of the birds in the latter catch had been banded in the earlier catch. About 30 birds which we believe to have been banded in the 1980s were captured. Some or all of the numbers on many of the bands of these birds had been obliterated by wear, so it might not be possible to confirm the ages of some of these long-lived birds.

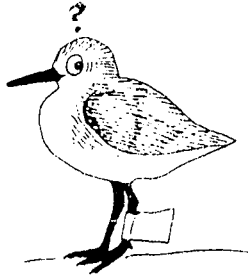
In addition, 5 birds which we had banded in the past at Jordan's farm on the South kaipara were recaptured. This is the first evidence of inter-site movement. We have shown Wrybills to be highly site-faithful, but now we know there are a few exceptions to that rule.

As in the past, only about 5% of the birds caught were in there first year.

Our thanks for financial support and equipment go to the Banding Office and the Miranda Trust. As ever, we are especially grateful to Graham Jordan for allowing us access to sites on his land.

Finally, we thank those 30 people who participated (sometimes without the luck of seeing a catch) in the group's activities.

STEPHEN DAVIES
& ADRIAN RIEGEN



Flag Watch 1992

Orange leg-flagging of waders has continued during the past year in south-eastern Australia with a further 3000 birds being marked. The project is aimed at increasing our knowledge of migration routes in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, at a time when habitat destruction is rampant and populations of some wader species appear to be in serious decline. Such information is essential for the formulation of soundly based management plans to ensure long term survival of the different wader species.

Allowing for a conservative annual survival rate of 75%, it is estimated that about 5500 leg-flagged birds are now flying up and down the Flyway.

Estimated numbers of flagged birds of each species are as follows:

Red-necked Stint	2600
Curlew Sandpiper	1200
Oriental Pratincole	450
Turnstone	300
Knot	300
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	300
Sanderling	150
Bar-tailed Godwit	150
Greenshank	30
Pacific Golden Plover	20

Small numbers of Eastern Curlew, Great Knot and Terek Sandpiper have also been leg-flagged.

Additionally, some Bar-tailed Godwits have been flagged green in Australia and New Zealand has commenced flagging Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits white.

Results to date have been very encouraging. Two Sanderlings have been seen on southwards migration in Japan, 5 Knots and 2 Red-necked Stints have been identified in New Zealand, and Red-necked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers have been seen on northwards migration in Hong Kong. Very useful information on both northwards and southwards

movements within Australia has also been obtained.

Most flags have been placed on the upper right leg (tibia), but a few are on the lower right leg (tarsus) – especially Turnstones – and on the left leg. The exact position is not important.

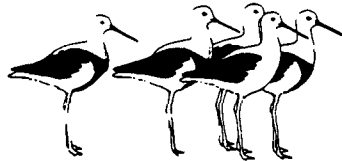
All sightings of such birds should be include species, place, date and also approximate numbers and species of waders present. The information should be sent to the Banding Office, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington.

MARK BARTER
Australasian Wader Studies Group

NZ-banded godwit seen in Japan

A white-flagged Bar-tailed Godwit – one of the birds caught and banded at Jordan's, South Kaipara, on 21/12/91 – was seen at the Ariabe Sea, Kyushu, Japan on 28/4/92. This is some 8990 kms from Jordan's! It was seen with orange- and green-flagged birds - these being flagged in Victoria and Queensland.

ADRIAN RIEGEN



AWSG NEWS

The Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG) is primarily a coordinating body, although it is involved directly in field activities such as the NW Australia Wader Expeditions. Much of the fieldwork, data gathering and research is carried out by the individuals, institutions and local amateur groups to whom this newsletter is directed. We are united in our fascination for the waders of the world, and you are urged to send us information about the history and activities of your group, or about your individual research project, to be profiled in *AWSG News*. We begin with one of the most active and successful groups studying waders in the East Asian Flyway.

The Victorian Wader Study Group

The Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG) is based in Melbourne and makes some 30 excursions each year to cannon-net, measure and band waders along the Victorian coast. It has also assisted similar groups in other Australian states, and its members usually form the core of experienced banders on the AWSG NW Australia wader expeditions.

The origins of the VWSG go back to 1975 with nine birds recorded as having been caught that year. In 1978, the Group was stimulated by the arrival of Dr Clive Minton from the UK with years of experience in the development and use of cannon nets. The following year was the first when operations were carried out at full capacity and some 8000 waders were banded. Since then the cumulative total of birds caught has exceeded 80 000, including some 16 000 retraps.

This has provided an enormous amount of data on movements, survival rates, the behaviour of different sexes and age groups, as well as revealing the hitherto unexpected existence of separate populations or subspecies. Retraps from the earliest catches are still turning up, so there are many records of birds that are at least 12 years old. So far about 60 scientific papers using data collected by the VWSG have been published in various journals.

Of the 31 kinds of waders banded by the VWSG, three stand out as indicator species, which are systematically sampled at certain sites throughout the year. These are Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. Larger species, such as Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots, and Far Eastern Curlews are also caught regularly. International recoveries have shown the importance of the Chinese coast as a staging area for many species, especially when returning northwards to their breeding grounds. They have also shown the very wide longitudinal spread of the breeding grounds in northern Eurasia and Alaska of birds that migrate to Australia.

A Curlew Sandpiper, banded in Victoria in 1988, was retrapped in June 1991 at its nest on the Taimyr Peninsula in northern Siberia. Not only is the 13 100 km distance between banding and recovery an Australian record, but the fact that the recovery site is also within the breeding area for birds on a different flyway, those that spend the non-breeding season in southern Africa, has implications regarding the homogeneity of the species.

In addition to the ongoing monitoring of the palearctic migrants, a special study of Banded Dotterels, in association with OSNZ, has recently ended.

With the winding down of the Banded Dotterel project, a 10-year study of the Victorian populations of Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers has begun. This ambitious and comprehensive attempt to understand these birds, by individually colour banding as much of the population as possible, has only been in progress for two years. Already many interesting movements of oystercatchers have been recorded, both along the coast and across Bass Strait to Tasmania.

Despite its name, the VWSG does not restrict its activities entirely to waders. Several species of terns breed and roost

along the Victorian coast and are caught for banded and colour flagging. This has already resulted in sightings of Crested and Caspian Terns as far away as Fraser Island, off the coast of Queensland.

The VWSG is certainly one of the most active groups studying the waders of the East Asia/West Pacific Flyway, and probably one of the most successful in the world. Its resource base, a city of three million people and a few hundred kilometres of coastline, is replicated many times within the Flyway, and it serves as a model for what can be achieved by an organised and enthusiastic amateur group.

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. Enquiries regarding membership should be directed to the AWSG Administrative Secretary, Brenda Murlis, 34 Centre Avenue, Vermont, Victoria 3133, Australia.

HUGO PHILLIPPS

Australasian Grebe at New Plymouth

On 29 Dec. 1991, an Australasian Grebe was found sitting in the driveway of a residential property in suburban New Plymouth. It was taken to the nearby Pouakai Zoo Park where it was placed in an aviary with appropriate facilities pending its intended release in a suitable local habitat. It appeared to be doing well, but unfortunately suddenly died on 8 Jan. 1992.



Australasian Grebe, New Plymouth, 30 December 1991.

(Photo David Medway)

When found the grebe appeared to be in good condition in all respects. No obviously suitable habitat for such a bird occurs in the immediate vicinity of the place where it was found. How it came to be sitting in a suburban driveway is a mystery. It is of course impossible to determine whether it came from elsewhere in New Zealand or was a recent arrival from Australia. Perhaps Taranaki has a population of Australasian Grebes that we do not yet know about.

DAVID MEDWAY

Recent Reports

Records for this autumn were received from Northland, Auckland, South Auckland, Waikato, Gisborne/Wairoa, Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa, Wellington, Marlborough, Nelson, West Coast, and Otago; plus a variety of keen travelling birdwatchers. Some of these records were reported to me at the AGM – when the effects of wine tasting were still apparent. The Rare Birds Committee has yet to adjudicate on the rarities reported here.

Many thanks to all those who sent in records. More are always welcome, especially from those areas that rarely, if ever, contribute.

Please send records for the September issue of *OSNZ news* to: Derek Onley, 49 Bernera Street, c/o Post Office, Karitane, Otago by 25 August.

Seabirds

Little beach patrolling was reported during autumn – 13 Mottled Petrels off the Northland beaches in May, a high number for the area, was the only thing of note. There wasn't a lot of sea watching going on either. 1 Buller's Shearwater was seen off the Cook Strait ferry on 4 May, about the time when most birds leave the Strait.

The last Sooty Shearwaters were seen off the Otago coast on 10 Apr. and also in Otago, off Purakaunui, Sooties and White-capped Mollymawks were seen hanging around feeding fur seals on 31 Mar. and 1 Apr., apparently feeding off scraps of fish. High numbers of Arctic Skuas were reported off the Northland coast in autumn and birds were present in Queen Charlotte Sound (Marlborough) in Apr/May. 3 were seen off Hilderthorpe beach (Canterbury) in mid Mar. and birds were still present off the Otago coast, north of Dunedin, in Apr/May, with a maximum of 7 reported off Shag Point on 10 Apr. Northland also had "quite a few" Pomarine Skuas off the east coast and a light phase bird was seen in Tory Channel (Marlborough) on 4 May.

Winter searches for Fairy Terns in the Auckland area located 3 at Kaipara South Head and a flock of 13 at Tabora in May. A Little Tern was still at Lake Ellesmere (Canterbury) in early June. 4 White-winged Black Terns that roosted with 400 or so White-fronted Terns on Pipikaraitu Beach (Otago Peninsula) on 5 Apr. were in a very uncharacteristic spot. One remained the next day.

Hérons etc

The first autumn record of Cattle Egrets was of 12-15 at Aka Aka, a regular site in S. Auckland, on 26 Mar. There were 7 at Onion Road (Waikato) by 29 Mar., then widespread records in Apr. Numbers were low, with a maximum of 20 at Rangiri (Waikato). Birds did not reach the regular sites in Marlborough (Grovettown) and Otago (Taieri Plain) until early May.

Royal Spoonbills left Otago during the first few weeks of April – there were 20 at Karitane on 27 Mar., decreasing to 4 by 13 Apr. However, birds were moving north earlier than this. The first sighting in the Nelson district was of 4 flying in from the south on 15 Feb. 2 were present at Gordon's Road, Manukau Harbour (S. Auckland) in Feb. and 31 visited Onoke Spit (Wairarapa) in mid Feb. March records in the North Island were widespread. There were 7 at Waikanae on 3 Mar., 2 at Somes Island (Wellington) on 19 Mar., and 13 at the Manawatu Estuary by 26 Mar. Farther north, 5 reached Wairoa by late Mar. and 4 were present at Whakatane (Bay of Plenty) on 14 Mar. Birds returned to Mangere (Auckland) in Apr., with 4 on the 5th and numbers continued to increase during May – there were 7 on the 12th and 22 on the 13th. In the far north, the first birds returned to Whangarei Harbour on 23 Apr. By 26 Apr. there were 9, with another 8 arriving on 9/10 May, including a colour-banded bird that had been seen on North Kaipara Harbour a week before. A bird colour banded as a chick in Marlborough was first seen, after a year's absence, at Lake Wairarapa in mid Apr. and then at Mangere (Auckland) in May.

A Little Egret that has been in the Nelson district for well over a year was still at the Waimea Estuary in May. 2 Little Egrets at Wattle Down Ponds (S. Auckland) during Mar. and Apr. could well be the same birds that frequented the area last year.

Outside their usual range, a Reef Heron at Purakaunui (Otago Peninsula) during Mar. and Apr. is one of the few left on the Otago coast.

Waterfowl

Northland appears to be the only place where Australian Little Grebes are well established. 12 were counted at Lake Waipapakawi in Feb. and 5 in Apr. Autumn numbers of Dabchicks at Masterton Sewage Ponds have declined over the past decade, from 74 to 28. On the other hand, Coots in Masterton's Q.E. Park bred successfully this year – 3 pairs fledged 7 chicks. In the Waikato, 4-5 juveniles were on Lake Whakamaru on 24 Mar. and 5 were counted on Cambridge Lakes on 29 Mar.

High counts of Canada Geese for the North Island came from Tuakau Sewage Ponds (S. Auckland) – 52 in Jan. and Lake Waahi (Waikato) – 820+ on 25 Apr. Paradise Shelducks have increased in numbers and distribution to the north of Auckland.

Groups of up to 22 NZ Scaup were counted in the Waikato in Mar. on Lakes Ohakuri, Atianui, Whakamaru, Maraetai and Waipawa. Henley Ponds in the Wairarapa is now a major site for this species in the region – 16 ducklings were

hatched this year. 2 wandering birds turned up at the Waikanae Estuary (Wellington) on 10 Mar.

The male Chestnut Teal returned to the Manawatu Estuary in May (or is it a different bird?).

Waders

Flocks of Banded Dotterels are common on the Otago coast during autumn, but 22 on low farm ponds well inland in the Maniatoto on 21 Mar. were unusual and may have come from the small population breeding on the ranges. A Black-fronted Dotterel turned up at Mangere, as last year, during May. 3 also reappeared at Lake Ellesmere during Apr/May.

A couple of Grey Plovers were present as usual at Farewell Spit and 2 more were at Kidd's, Karaka (Auckland), in Mar. An Eastern Curlew was at the Manawatu Estuary until late Mar. A whimbrel was also reported from there and there were 7 at Seagrove, Manukau (Auckland) on May and 1 at Tauranganui Estuary (Waikato) on 11 May. 2 Hudsonian Godwits were at Okarito (West Coast) in mid Apr.

Parengarenga, well watched of late, held a Greenshank in Apr. and another was present at Whakamahī Lagoon (Wairoa) from late Dec. to 1 Mar. - probably the first record for the district.

90 Curlew Sandpipers were at Parengarenga over summer was the highest number ever recorded from one site in NZ. 8 remained at Miranda on 21 Apr., 2 at the Manawatu Estuary in mid May and up to 21 at Lake Ellesmere in May. Other smaller waders to stay into winter were a Sanderling at Parengarenga; tattlers at Parengarenga, Matarangi (Coromandel), and the Manawatu; Pectoral Sandpiper at Waipu (Northland), a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Lake Ellesmere; Terek Sandpipers at Whangarei, Tamaki Estuary (Auckland) and Manawatu; and 23 Red-necked Stints at Lake Ellesmere.

The well-publicised Broad-billed Sandpiper was still at the Manawatu on 13 May.

2 Lesser Knots with orange leg flags, presumably from Australia, were still at Miranda on 27 Apr.

... and the rest

A count of Little Spotted Kiwis on Hen I. proved that breeding has taken place - the total of 30 included a young male.

120 Little Black Shags were counted on Lake Whangape (Waikato) in late Mar., with a further 20 on L. Ohakuri. 2 Pied Shags were at Hamilton Lake on 26 Apr.

Surveys of rails by cats continue to provide useful distribution information, although the survey methods lack finesse. A Banded Rail brought home by a cat at Boggy Pond, L. Wairarapa, seems to be the first record for the area since 1927! A Marsh Crake at Hunt's Beach (West Coast) on 11 Apr. was alive and well.

Urban living NZ Falcons were present at Seatoun and Mt Victoria (Wellington) in Feb. and one terrorised the occupants of an aviary in Dunedin's Botanic Gardens during autumn. Other records came from Arapawa I., (Marlborough), the Haurangi Range, east of Mt Ross (Wairarapa), and Lake Tekapo (Canterbury).

A Red-legged Partridge at a Wairarapa farm last year, was well away from the areas where they have been released. Small numbers of Brown Quail were seen at Lakes Atianui and Whakamaru (Waikato) in late Mar.

A report of a flock of parakeets in manuka scrub in the Haurangi Range shows the scattered population continues there. Kakas continue to nip into suburban Auckland, this time at Beachlands in Apr., and Rainbow Lorikeets are apparently striving to get on the NZ list in Birkenhead. A flock of over 80 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in the Lake Rotokauri area (Waikato) was exceptionally large. And to end this review of exotica, Barbary Doves now grace the barbecues in the Havelock North motor camp.

Yet another Barn Owl put in a brief appearance near a large aircraft; this time at Whenuapai airforce base (Auckland) on 21 Apr.

Long-tailed Cuckoos were seen and heard passing through the Waitakere Ranges and Tiritiri I. in March. Autumn records of this species are few and far between.

Robins are the latest addition to the Tiritiri I. fauna. 5 were reported from an equally unnatural habitat, pine forest, at L. Atianui (Waikato). Rooks seem to be on the increase in the Wairarapa. 30 were in the Upper Plain area, west of Masterton in May. 3 colonies of up to 500 birds are now known from the north of the town - at Kaiparoro Road, Bideford and Mauriceville. The first Song Thrush song of the year was heard at Remuera (Auckland) on 4 May. Farther south, they started singing on 5 May in Christchurch, but not until 23 May at Karitane (Otago) - the latter 17 days later than last year.

Finally, two small Australian vagrants, both well away from airports. A Tree Martin was seen at Pukiti Sewage Ponds (Waikato) on 20 Feb. and a female Satin Flycatcher was present at Okarito (West Coast) for at least 2 weeks in mid Apr. The latter is the third record for NZ of a very unlikely trans-Tasman vagrant.

Compiled by DEREK ONLEY

Regional Roundup

Northland

We have had a busy three months with a wide variety of activities. Monthly beach patrols continued with average results and then in March we completed our usual Whangarei Harbour survey. No whimbrels or Golden Plovers were seen at their usual

haunts and 3 Little Terns were the only unusual birds reported.

The Pouto Lake survey was a grand success in February, with 23 members taking part. This year, the 16th since regular surveys were started, 104 Dabchicks were found; up on previous years. In conjunction with the lake survey, we held the 12-hour Pouto Bird Race. This is a fun event with no prize for the winners, but is hotly contested in some quarters. Fifty species were recorded this year and the winning team saw 43 of these.

The second Great Northland Bird Race was held 28-29 February, with 15 members in 5 teams competing. During the 24 hours, 72 species were seen and 1132 km travelled. The winning team comprised Gavin Grant, Richard Parrish, and Ray Pierce and they saw a very creditable 63 species. Red Rooster and his Battery Hens (Brian Walsh, Meryl Robinson and Diana Dombroski) travelled the least distance for most species.

Nine Royal Spoonbills arrived in Whangarei Harbour this April and rumour has it that there are currently 11 present.

April activities included a meeting at which David Lawrie gave a very interesting account of the IOC subantarctic cruise and did the honours presenting the shield for the Great Northland Bird Race, and a survey of Motukawanui Island.

Finally, our second seabird watching trip was to the Chickens on 2 May. We left from Whangarei Town Basin around 08.30 and cruised down the harbour. Passing the Port we saw 6 of the Royal Spoonbills in the morning and 7 on the way home in the afternoon. Near Limestone Island an Arctic Skua was seen - an unusual sighting so far up the harbour. Eventually, 27 species were seen during the day, including 13 species of seabird. Outside the harbour there were few birds on the way out, but good numbers on the way home. It was a great opportunity to observe Flesh-footed Shearwaters and Grey-faced Petrels together and to learn how to distinguish between them at sea. Beach patrolling is all very well, but there is nothing like seeing live seabirds in their natural habitat. Our youngest member, aged 22 days at the time, was one of the 20 people who went on this trip.

(Pat Miller)

South Auckland

In March we joined the Miranda Naturalists' Trust for their open day to farewell the arctic waders and hear a talk by Adrian Riegen. The first weekend in May saw Auckland and South Auckland members participate in a joint Auckland Regional Council/DoC/OSNZ survey of Kokako in the Hunua Ranges. We hope that the cold blustery weather was the cause of poor counts this time. Our survey of Lake Pokorua had to be cancelled, but some members took advantage of the

chance to look over Thurlow Farm, newly acquired by the Manukau City Council. This adjoins the valuable Puhinui Creek area. Otherwise, Tony Habraken and his helpers have been keeping a sharp eye on the movements of the local and visiting colour-banded Pied Stilts.

For our evening meeting in February we were lucky to have Paul Harrison showing us recent slides. Paul has since left for an extended trip to the UK and Europe. In March, Lynda Conyngham shared her fascinating trip to South America, including Ecuador and the Galapagos. April to us from Adelaide to Melbourne with David Lawrie and in May David Stonex, though not claiming to be an ornithologist, opened our eyes to a wealth of plumage details with his superb bird slides – many from the Firth of Thames.

(Anthea Goodwin)

Waikato

Our year began in February with a sharing of experiences – Trevor Taylor's slides of African birds and wildlife; Folkert Nieuwland's wader observations; Paul Cumings' experiences on the Maud Island Fluttering Shearwater transfer; Don Horne's photographic essay on our "small" world; Bev Woolley's slides on Cuvier Island; and Ian Reid's video of Stitchbirds and Kaka on Kapiti Island.

Monthly 10-minute bird identifications continue. John Rowe gave an excellent illustrated comparison of Spine-tailed Swift, Welcome Swallow and Australian Tree Martin which paid off for Paul Cuming when he spotted a Tree Martin at the local sewage ponds the very next day.

A dead White-faced Storm Petrel and the partial remains of a White-capped Mollmawk provided members with valuable identification experience. Both birds, head only of the mollmawk) are to be permanently mounted for display at the Miranda Naturalists' Trust Centre.

A February field trip to the Kaimai Ranges revealed a healthy Robin population, including juveniles, in good forest on the Rapurapu Stream.

A mid March day trip to White Island proved exciting vulcanology-wise, but disappointingly few seabirds were seen. Apart from large numbers of Gannets, which nest on the island, we also recorded a few Buller's Shearwaters, Fluttering Shearwaters, Flesh-footed Shearwaters, and a Diving Petrel. After spending time ashore we circled the island, noting the 4 large Gannetries and the ash covered remnant pohutukawa forest on the outer flanks of the island where Grey-faced Petrels breed. Grey Ternlets used to breed on the Volkner Rocks which are sometimes used by the defence forces for target practice! "Ticking lists" sharpened members' observations during the journey to Whakatane, which was broken with stops at estuaries and river mouths. Good

sightings of Fernbird, White Heron, Royal Spoonbills, and shag species resulted.

Robin Child spoke at our March meeting and unravelled some of the mysteries of wader identification with us.

A weekend trip to Rangitoto Station was enjoyed by 16 enthusiasts, with good numbers of bush birds including Robin, Whitehead and a NZ Falcon being seen. Forest re-plantings show much growth since the removal of stock. Arthur Cowan's barbecue lunch of venison sausages and billy tea was greatly appreciated by all.

Under Ian Reid's direction, the Grey-faced Petrel monitoring continues at Mt Maunganui. Burrows have been checked and activities noted, while 20 new birds have been banded. Motuoha Island has been visited and burrows mapped as a control colony.

Four Waikato members learned a lot about Wrybills when over 600 birds were netted by the Miranda Banders at Miranda over Easter. A special bonus was to hold a Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and a Knot, each in various stages of colouring up.

Beach patrols, local lake surveys, checks on Cattle Egrets, searching for colour banded Pied Stilts and NZ Dotterels keeps us all pretty actively involved.

At our AGM, held in April, we learned with regret that Stella Rowe, after five years of intensive RRing, had decided to step aside. Bev. Woolley paid tribute to Stella's stirring work as an able leader, whose warmth and friendship has generated a keen interest in our region's projects. On trips, camps and weekends when our birding knowledge has been enhanced by Stella's abilities and willingness to share her skills and expertise. Stella was presented with the book *At home and abroad* and a cheque as a mark of Waikato members' appreciation.

(Bev. Woolley)

Bay of Plenty

Janet Houston crews for a charter fishing vessel and has a keen interest in sea birds. During March and April she recorded the following species – Flesh-footed Shearwater, Buller's Shearwater, Black Petrel, Diving Petrel, Black-browed Mollmawk, Sooty Shearwater, Brown Skua, Arctic Skua, Cape Pigeon.

Ohiwa Harbour and Ohope Spit always have plenty to offer in the way of waders. Malcolm Hutton's latest report included SIPO, Variable Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Turnstone, Banded Dotterel, NZ Dotterel Bar-tailed Godwit, Pied Stilt and Caspian Tern. Bill Sloan informs us that a single Cattle Egret has just joined a pair which summered at Kukumoa, and 3 Royal Spoonbills have arrived.

A trip to Matata by members recently, reported 3 Black-fronted Dotterels, 1 White Heron, Australian Coots, 1 Bittern,

3 NZ Dabchicks, Scaup, Grey Duck, 150 Shovelers, and 10 Dunnocks – 4 seen at once in fact! There are Fernbirds and crane in that area, though none were seen or heard. It is a good place to stop if you are passing that way. Ken & Nina Spencer visited Matata on 15/3 and found 4 Royal Spoonbills.

Paddy Latham and Hodge Sich found 4 Royal Spoonbills at Little Waihi on 26/3. Perhaps the same birds that were at Matata.

Little Waihi, Maketu and Kaituna Cut are close together and we survey them in a day's outing. It is a very interesting area for its variety of waders, herons and waterfowl. Gordon & Leonie Blackmore found Curlew Sandpipers, whimbrel, and Golden Plovers there. Mongolian Dotterel, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and red-necked Stint are often seen in summer.

Paddy Latham counted 10 Robins on the Otanewaihuku bush track recently. Jenny & Ross Carmichael and Paddy Latham counted 30 Wrybill at the Pukehina Spit on 22/3.

(Len Buchanan)

Hawkes Bay

A meeting was held at the Ahuriri Education Centre, chiefly to bring members up to date with happenings within the region and to vote for the position of RR.

Jim Hamilton and I have been involved with submissions and a hearing for the draft management plan for the Ahuriri Estuary. The committee put forward two options with the plan. The first option was for further development of the estuary to cater for recreational watersport use and the second option was to leave the estuary as is. There seems to be people in favour of both options. Unfortunately, the committee seem determined to take the middle road and therefore there will probably be reclamation of more of the estuary.

At Easter we carried out a Dabchick survey and also counted most other waterfowl and waders on all the larger waterbodies of the region (some 54). We covered the 6 larger lakes by canoes and Department of Conservation personnel covered the more inaccessible lakes for us. A total of 395 Dabchicks were counted and there are reports of others on smaller farm ponds, so our total is probably conservative. A lot of the waterbodies covered had not been surveyed previously by OSNZ, so it gave us a good idea of the distribution and numbers of species such as coot, Scaup, and Grey Teal.

(Christine McRae)

Wanganui

We started the year with a meeting at the Museum, where we were informed by Peter Calkin that the poor condition of some of the bird displays was a result of an infestation by carpet beetles.

At our second meeting, we were given a talk about the birds of Vanuatu by Colin & Robyn Ogle. This was a very informative and enjoyable evening.

Our passerine banding is progressing well and the following birds have been banded to date: House Sparrow 422, Silvereye 57, Blackbird 57, Goldfinch 46, Starling 37, Greenfinch 36, Song Thrush 32, Welcome Swallow 16, Kingfisher 7, Chaffinch 5, Fantail 4, Yellowhammer 2, Dunnock 1, Bellbird 1, and Grey Warbler 1.

Other activities include a bird survey of Wanganui City and adjacent areas, in conjunction with the Conservation Corps and the Department of Conservation.

Two of our members have permits for the rehabilitation of native and introduced birds. So far, they have received 1 Morepork, 16 Harriers, 4 Kingfishers, 2 NZ Pigeons, 1 Shining Cuckoo, 2 Silvereyes, 1 Blackbird, 1 Song Thrush and numerous Mallards for attention.

(Tom Teasdale)

Manawatu

1992 began with an evening meeting in February at Roger & Jennifer Wasley's house in Fielding. They gave an excellent illustrated talk about their Christmas/New Year sojourn to the Chatham Islands with the Taiko Research Group.

On 23 Feb. we had a field trip to Hawkes Bay. Christine McRae and her group met us at Waipukerau and we headed for Porangahau Estuary. By this time, Roger Wasley had snapped his Achilles tendon and was in plaster, but he still managed to travel down the beach for the whole day on his crutches. After this trip we realised how lucky we are in the Manawatu in tracking down waders.

In March we had the Hawkes Bay and Wellington groups visiting Foxton Estuary. The birds turned on a marvellous display, with the tide at just the right level to force the birds almost to within arms reach of the birdwatchers. Everyone saw all the rare wading birds very clearly, plus the numerous godwits and knots. There were lots of new telescopes in evidence!

Our evening meeting in April was a talk by Brent Lovelock on DoC activities in our region – spartina control at Foxton, developments at Pukepuke Lagoon, and a recent Blue Duck survey in the Ruahine Forest Park.

There have been up to 47 Royal Spoonbills at Foxton Estuary, but numbers seem to have stabilised in May at 30-34 birds. One was seen to be having difficulty walking and then found dead on 18 May – it had a shattered leg and a blood-stained wing, possibly a victim of the duck-shooting season!

Seven members attended the AGM in Masterton. Thanks to Tenick and his many helpers for a wonderful weekend.

(Pam Slack)

Wairarapa

Our Royal Spoonbill count this February only produced 4 birds. However, about a week earlier, 31 birds were reported at Onoke Spit.

We have had two very interesting talks this year. One from Martin Bell, Senior Conservation Officer on the current breeding programmes at the National Wildlife Centre. The other talk was from Hugh Robertson, who enlightened us about kiwis and the Kiwi Recovery Programme.

Another successful garage sale was held in February and in a short space of time a considerable amount of "rubbish" was exchanged for a considerable amount of money. We recommend these sales as an easy way of raising funds.

A field trip in March gave us the opportunity of exploring wetlands (new to us) out near the east coast at Homewood. Good crane habitat was present, but we did not manage to raise any with our tapes.

One of the most successful outings for our branch was a trip to Wellington Zoo. A bus load of over 30 travelled to Wellington for this and had a very interesting guided tour of the birds by the Bird Curator.

Most of our activity this year has been spent planning the AGM. We had a committee of 15 who worked long and hard and we were delighted that everything seemed to go off well. Even the weather was superb, which rather surprised us. We were pleased with the numbers attending (about 110) and with the generous way in which they contributed and bought books at our auction. The "celebrity auctioneers" were highly professional and provided excellent entertainment. The auction raised over \$1200 and this will go towards completing our bird slide library. We would like to thank all those who attended and helped make the auction and AGM a success.

(Tenick Dennison)

Wellington

The year started well with four excellent evening meetings. In February, members reported on their summer activities including Gavin Woodward returning from his fifth trip to Taiko Town. Gavin brought us up to date on the Taiko project – 2 were caught while Gavin was there, one a recapture from 1989. Gavin and David Cormick revealed their photographic talents with some excellent slides.

Old bones may sound boring but not when Phil Millener from the National Museum gave us heaps of information about subfossil bones on the Chatham Islands. Did you know some bones found there are up to 6000 years old? That more Taiko bones than any other species are found? And the bones are found in sand dunes, hollows and ridges, some in midden

sites, some in caves, some in surface sediment. In former days there were 36 breeding species of birds on the Chathams, currently there are 15 species, excluding historic colonists and introductions.

April brought our AGM with unopposed re-election of Alan Munro as RR and the rest of the committee. Then four members spoke about their own projects. David Bell and three friends have been counting Variable Oystercatchers on the shore en route home from school. This weekly count has averaged 8 birds (range 1-30) and he hopes to establish numbers, seasonality and habitat. Janice Woon described the counts and observations she has taken in her garden in Upper Hutt. Her records show clear seasonal patterns in some of the 31 species recorded. Reg Cotter showed some slides of Somes Island, and talked about the revegetation programme being carried out there, and the birds of the island. The evening finished with Alan Munro's account of bird watching by train – he travels to Wellington each day and has observed the birds, mainly shags, seen between Petone and Kaiwharawhara over the past 10 years.

Hugh Robertson gave us a fascinating talk at our May meeting about the Kiwi Recovery Programme which he is leading. The plan is a five year partnership of research and action, between the Department of Conservation and the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, with strong financial support from the Bank of New Zealand. The plan's major goals are to maintain the genetic variety of species and subspecies; to increase the numbers of kiwis; to increase the number of places they live. Hugh's talk elicited a flurry of questions from his appreciative audience. I'm not sure, however, that all bodes well for the kiwi – Elsie Gibbon's last question was "Do they taste good?"

Outdoor activities have included a quarterly Kapiti Island count and a Mana Island visit. The latter the first of the new bi-annual count programme. The 7 Takahe on Mana are now free range and are being tracked each day with radio telemetry. The April visit to Kapiti was delayed a week due to rough seas, but a full team spent the following weekend on the island and completed the three-monthly count. A total of 172 five-minute counts were carried out on 6 transect lines – each walked (climbed!) 4 times. Comparison of the results with counts carried out previously suggest there may be some increase in the number of Tuis and Native Pigeons, and a fall in the numbers of Kakariki and Robins. On Saturday night, 2 kiwis were caught, which gave some of us our first close look at these elusive birds.

Armed with binoculars, telescopes, cameras and a sketch book, one large black dog plus 8 people spent a weekend in February searching for Blue Ducks on the Manganui-teao River. A female in moult

was found upstream from the bridge on SH4, and 4 other Blue Ducks were seen in the lower reaches of the river, in Murray Williams' study area. Thanks to Kerry Oates for this trip.

On a high tide in March, members from Wellington and Manawatu met at the Manawatu Estuary for good views of godwit, knot, Golden Plover, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, tattler, Turnstone, Eastern Curlew, whimbrel, and Red-necked Stint – an impressive list for a small and readily accessible area.

Many of us have just attended a very successful AGM in Masterton - thank you Wairarapa.

(Ros Batcheler)

Canterbury

In February, our first meeting for the year was, as usual, given over to a review of members' activities over the summer. This always provides an interesting start to the programme and this year was no exception.

For the March meeting we were treated to a talk by Dr Terry Galloway, a Canadian scientist visiting the University of Canterbury. After a general introduction to some of the ectoparasites of birds and beasts which occur in Canada (including some photos definitely not used by the Canadian Tourism Bureau), we were told about Terry's search for the vectors of a particularly nasty disease. Eventually, he discovered that Cliff Swallows probably do not play host to such beasts, but they certainly provide food and board for a considerable number of interesting fleas. Members certainly appreciated Terry's enthusiastic and clear presentation.

In April, Roger Lavers brought us up to date on the distribution, population trends, and feeding habits of Takahe. Complete with video and slide presentations, this was enjoyed by a good turnout of members.

NZ Scaup, another endemic species, was the topic of our May meeting. Sarah Stokes recently completed her M.Sc study of the breeding habits of these delightful ducks and we were privileged to hear her account. Although hatching success of her study population at Lake Clearwater is good, survival of ducklings is poor – primarily due to predation.

During the past few weeks we have resumed our Silvereye banding programme and already have some interesting results. At an orchard where we banded about 1500 birds last winter, our two banding sessions this winter have resulted in the capture of 236 birds and 50 of these were recaptures from 1991.

(Paul Sagar)

Otago

At the February indoor meeting Peter Dann, the Philip Island penguin expert, gave a very interesting talk on the census work he has been doing on Little Blue Penguins along the Otago coast. Everybody present was pleasantly surprised to hear that Taieri Island, a small island off the Taieri Rivermouth, had 1338 breeding pairs this season.

Henrik Moller, from the Zoology Department of the University of Otago and organiser of the capturing programme of predators of Yellow-eyed Penguins, gave a large crown an insight into the problems of predation of these penguins.

Local members have embarked on a census of bush birds in the exotic tree plantation and adjacent remnants of native bush in Dunedin. We know what species of birds are present, but not the numbers. The aim of the project is to compare the bird populations of exotic and native bush.

After reading Colin O'Donnell's OSNZ news article about the decline of the Cirl Bunting in Britain and Europe, we have decided to try and find the breeding Cirl Buntings in Otago.

(Peter Schweigman)

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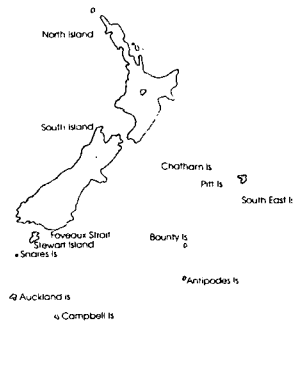
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