

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. 66 March, 1993

Note Deadline for the June issue will be 10th
May.

NZ Pigeon – courtship to laying

While on holiday at Sandy Bay, Kenepuru Sound, a pair of NZ Pigeons built a nest in a beech that was one of an intertwined trio of trees in the garden of the house where we were staying. The other two trees were a kanuka and a mahoe. The nest site was in the dense upper part of the beech, but a branch from the kanuka grew through the beech and along with some thin beech branches provided support for the nest.

My family thought it was unreasonable of the pigeons to select a tree just 3 m from the balcony when I was supposed to be holiday and birdwatching was at the bottom of the list of priorities. Nevertheless, I was able to observe the pigeons and even had help from family members too.

We had noticed that four pigeons in the vicinity were chasing one another and sometimes landing in nearby trees or on the powerlines along the road. On 22 January 1993 I noticed that a pigeon had flown into the beech and did not seem to have reappeared. I went out to investigate and saw in a dark part of the canopy that in fact there were two pigeons sitting (not perched in an upright manner) and engaged in mutual preening.

On 23 January the pair were noticed mating a couple of times, on the wires along the road and in the kanuka. When flying in to land beside the female, the male performed the following display. First, it turned around a couple of times on the perch, moving to the left and to the right in a lively fashion. Following that it put its bill tip into the top of its wing a few times. Then it stretched up while bowing its head so that its neck feathers seemed raised or in some way separated a little, and its bill was down on its breast. In this position it



bounced up and down several times. If the female was receptive she would move into a horizontal position and he would mount and mate with her.

At 18:00 h that day we noticed that the birds were starting to collect twigs from the kanuka. Where would the nest be? To our amazement they simply walked from the kanuka into the beech. It was only then that we realised that the nest was going to be built in our front garden, just 3 m from the house, and not somewhere in the bush covered hillside.

Very few sticks were gathered that evening and the birds soon flew off. I went to see where the nest was situated and was most interested to find that it was exactly where the birds had been mutual preening the previous day. There were only three sticks there, but it was a start.

On 24 January the pigeons arrived at 07:25 h and at 07:50 h started collecting a few sticks from the kanuka. There was no real urgency. There were times of sitting and preening. Sometimes a twig would be tested and twisted a little and if it did not

break they would not necessarily look for another, but just give up and preen. By 08:15 h they were gone but I noticed them later in the morning. For the first time, the female sat on the scanty nest and collected the sticks brought by the male.

During the rest of the day there was sporadic nest building and for the first time the male started collecting sticks away from the immediate vicinity of the nest. A few kanuka trees about 20 m away provided the fresh source of sticks. Many of the sticks were dry and I could hear the crack as they were broken off.

Throughout 25 January more sporadic collecting of sticks occurred, the female mostly staying on the nest. The male chased away a pugnacious Tui that arrived and flicked its wings, and swooped at another NZ Pigeon that strayed too close.

Very little nest building occurred on 26 January. Once, the male gave a partial display beside the female. From 11:50 to 13:35 h the female was on the nest, the male occasionally bringing a stick, but usually just preening or giving very soft calls. Both birds were off for a couple of hours but later quite a few sticks were brought to the nest, most by the male who presented them to the female on the nest. At 17:15 h both birds were across the road, the male doing a partial display beside the female. A third pigeon arrived and the male performed both a wing flicking and swooping display.

At 19:00 h both birds were sitting together in the kanuka tree near the nest and the female slipped onto the nest at 19:10 h. She was still there at 21:10 h when it was quite dark and I believe that she stayed all night.

Throughout the morning of 27 January the female never left the nest and when I

finally had a careful look at midday I saw that she had laid one egg. Unfortunately I was not able to follow the nest any longer as our holiday finished that day.

DON HADDEN

New members

The Society would like to welcome the following new members and wishes them many happy years of birdwatching.

Peter Besier, Chris Bindon, Dr Lloyd Davis, Barrie Henderson, Daphne B. Jameson, C.F.L. Jenks, Maile A. Kjargaard, Dawn La Roche, Sue McIntosh, Graham MacKereth, Ruedigar Mack, Hiroyuki Nakae, Elizabeth Ostring, Margo Peart, J. Plumstead, A.M. Pyl, Paul Russell, Pauline R. Smith, University of Oklahoma, Brigham Young University, Diane Willis.

Science Fair Winners Emma Fillery, Caroline Greville, Hayden Knight, Rachel Melville.

HAZEL HARTY
Membership Secretary

Donations

Council would like to thank the following for their donations to the Society in the first two months of the year.

Niuls Ake Anderson, Margaret Bishop, Malcolm Boag, Bill Cash, Paul Cuming, Nicolas Dillon, C.P. Eddington, C.J. Foreman, Mel Galbraith, Mrs I.N. Gollop, Mike & Sharon Graham, Colin G. Hill, J.R. Jackson, Mrs P.A. Jamieson, Stewart Lauder, Harro Muller, Kerry Oates, Ian Sangster, Lorna Simpkin, Mona I. Taylor, Alan Tennyson, W.A. Watters.

HAZEL HARTY,
Membership Secretary

Wanted

— convenor for the Beach Patrol Scheme

Ralph Powlesland has decided to relinquish responsibility for the Beach Patrol Scheme from December 1993. Thus Council seeks a volunteer to be convenor of this well supported scheme. The task involves supplying cards to patrollers, replying to enquiries, entering data into the Society's Beach Patrol Scheme computer, running various analysis programmes, providing an annual preliminary report to Council just prior to the AGM, and submitting a paper about each year's results for publication in *Notornis*.

A detailed job description is available from the Secretary.

If you are interested in applying for the position, please contact
The Secretary,
OSNZ, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington,
by 10 May 1993.

Falla Memorial Award & A.T. Edgar Junior Award – 1993

Nominations are called for the above awards and should be with the Secretary, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington by 30 June 1993. Nominations should be on the standard form, which is obtainable from RRs.

All nominations will be considered by the Awards Committee and its recommendations will be forwarded to Council for consideration at its spring meeting.

A full summary of OSNZ awards procedures was published in OSNZ news 58 (March 1991).

RAEWYN EMPSON,
Secretary

Periodicals held in the OSNZ Library

The following is a list of the periodicals held by the OSNZ Library as at 31 March 1993.

Acta Ornithologica (Poland) 1936 – *Acta Zoologica* (Poland) 1972 – *Alauda* (France) 1954 – *American Museum Novitates* (USA) 1974 – *Amokura* (NZ) 1977 – *Aquila* (Hungary) 1943 – *Ardea* (Netherlands) 1962 – *Ardeola* (Spain) 1954 – *Auk* (USA) 1930 – *Auspicium* (Germany) 1959-1984 (ceased publication) *Australian Bird Bander* (now *Corella*) 1963-1976 *Australian Bird Watcher* 1969-1990 *Australian Birds and NSW Field Ornithologists Club Newsletter* 1974 – *Australasian Seabird Group Newsletter* 1976-1986 *Aves* (Belgian) 1949 – *Bird Banding* (now *Journal of Field Ornithology*) 1930-1979 *Bird Conservation International* (UK) 1991 – *Bird Observer* (Victoria) 1967 – *Bird Study* (UK) 1954 – *Birding in South Africa* (ex *Bokmakierie*) 1989 – *Birds* (RSPB, UK) 1965 – *Bokmakierie* (now *Birding in South Africa*) 1955-1988 – *British Birds* 1949 – *British Naturalist* 1955 – *BTO News* (UK) 1953 – *Californian Birds* (now *Western Birds*) 1970-1972 *Condor* (USA) 1942 – *Corella* (ex *Australian Bird Bander*) 1977 – *Cormorant* (now *Marine Ornithology*) 1977-1989 – *Countryside* (UK) 1949 – *Dutch Birding* 1991 – *Elepaio* (Hawaii) 1939 – *El Hornero* (Argentina) 1990 – *Emu* (Australia) 1904 – *Explorer* (USA) 1954 – *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Annual Report* (UK) 1972 – *Finnish Game Research* 1963 – *Ibis* (UK) 1891 – *IUCN Bulletin* (Switzerland) 1971 – *Japanese Journal of Ornithology* (ex *Torii*) 1986 – *Journal of Field Ornithology* (USA) (ex *Bird Banding*) 1980 – *Journal of the Yamashina Institute* (Japan) 1958-1988 – *Journal fur Ornithologie* (Germany) 1951 – *Kiwi House Review* (ex *Otorohanga Zoological Newsletter*) 1989 – *La Garcilla* (Spain) 1984 – *Larus* (Croatia) 1948 – *Le Gerfaut* (Belguim) 1962 – *Living Bird* (USA) 1962 – *L'Oiseau et R.F.O.* (France) 1952 –

Marine Ornithology (ex *Cormorant*) (South Africa) 1990 – *Muruk and Papua New Guinea Newsletter* 1970 – *Naika* (Vanuatu) 1981 – NZ Department of Internal Affairs – Numbered Publications 1952 – 1984 – *NSW Field Ornithologists Club Newsletter* 1967 – *Notornis* (NZ) 1943 – *Notaki Ornitologiczna* (Poland) 1961-1986 – *Ornis Fennica* (Finland) 1957 – *Ornithologischer Anzeiger* (Germany) 1952 – *OSNZ News* (NZ) 1977 – *Ornithologische Beobachter* (Switzerland) 1952 – *Ornithologische Mitteilungen* (Germany) 1952 – *Ornis Svecica* (Sweden) 1952 – *Ostrich* (South Africa) 1942 – Otago Acclimatisation Society (NZ) 1970 – *Otorohanga Zoological Society Newsletter* (now *Kiwi House Review*) 1973-1988 – *RAOU News* (now *Wingspan*) (Australia) 1969-1990 – *Ring* (Poland) 1954 – *Ringling and Migration* (UK) 1974 – *Sarawak Museum Journal* 1949 – *Scottish Birds* 1958 – *Seabird* (UK) 1989 – *South Australian Ornithologist* 1942 – *Silt* (Australia) 1981 – *Sunbird* (Australia) 1974 – *Suomen Riista* (Finland) 1975 – *Tara* (NZ) 1976 – *Tasmanian Bird Report* 1981 – *Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club* 1946 – *Tasmanian Shorebird Study Group - An Occasional Stint* 1982-1986 – *Torii* (now *Japanese Journal of Ornithology*) 1947-1986 – *Var Fagelvarld* (Sweden) 1956 – *Die Vogelwarte* (Germany) 1941 – *Die Vogelwelt* (Germany) 1953 – *Wader Study Group Bulletin* (UK) 1970-1987 – *Western Birds* (ex *Californian Birds*) (USA) 1973 – *Wildfowl Trust* (UK) 1974 – *Wilson Bulletin* (USA) 1944 – *Wingspan* (ex *RAOU News*) (Australia) 1991 – *World Birdwatch ICBP Newsletter* (UK) 1992 –

Compiled by DOUG BOOTH

Profiles



Mark Nee, Honorary Treasurer

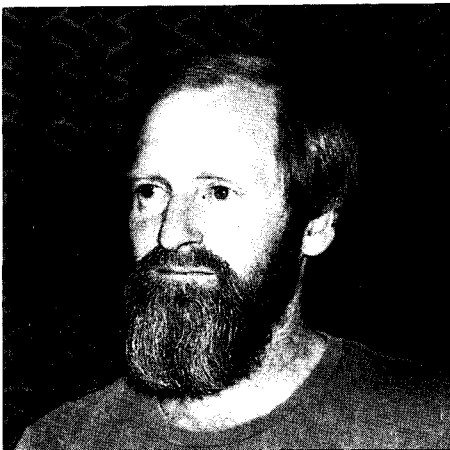
Mark Nee was born in Christchurch 56 years ago, and educated at St Bedes College and the University of Canterbury. He has been employed in senior accounting and administrative positions in Christchurch and Napier for over 30 years, after obtaining a B.Comm. Chartered Accountancy and Advanced Cost and Management examinations.

With his wife, Agnes, and family he moved to Napier 18 years ago, where they continue their interest in conservation and current affairs. Currently, Mark is Councillor and Treasurer for the Napier branch of the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society.

Now that his family have left home, apart from a number of local audits he is free of the many school committee and sporting club interests many parents share.

While a non-active member of OSNZ for some years, Mark found that his interest was greatly stimulated by the IOC in Christchurch and he enjoys very much assisting Council in his specialist accounting and administrative fields.

Ralph Powlesland – Council Member & Beach Patrol Scheme Convenor



Ralph's interest in birds was fostered from an early age by his parents allowing him to have hens, ducks and racing pigeons as pets. Subsequently, these pets were replaced with a few aviary species. In 1974, while at Massey University studying the impacts of blood-sucking mites on nestling Starlings, Ralph was introduced to OSNZ by Hugh Robertson. He took part in several field trips of the Manawatu branch, particularly beach patrolling along the Himaitangi-Foxton coast. Being involved in beach patrols during 1974-1975 when wrecks of prions occurred has ensured his keen interest in this activity ever since.

In 1976, he and Mary shifted to Kaikoura where they studied passerines at Kowhai Bush. Ralph studied the time-budgets of the South Island Robin, and Mary the breeding of Fantails. Both species proved excellent subjects for detailed studies since their confiding natures enabled them to be readily caught for colour banding, and close observations of nesting.

Following completion of his thesis, they shifted to Wellington where Ralph was initially employed by the Wildlife Service. His first project involved studying North Island Kokako at Puketū Forest, near Kerikeri. Lasting memories from the study are of magnificent kauris, close

encounters with 'Pet Bird', and the sight and song of a Kokako in the tops of a kauri at dawn on a still misty morning. It was at about this time that he took over responsibility for the Beach Patrol Scheme.

From 1982 to 1991, Ralph was part of a Wildlife Service, and subsequently the Department of Conservation, team endeavouring to unravel the biology of the Kakapo and bring about its conservation. As a result he has had the good fortune to enjoy the birding delights of Stewart, Codfish, Maud and Little Barrier Islands. Presently, he is studying another of NZ's herbivorous birds, the Chatham Island Pigeon.

Ralph was elected to Council in 1991, and although this has meant more evenings and wet weekends spent on OSNZ matters, fine weekends are still reserved for gardening or going birdwatching. Being a member of the Wellington branch has enabled him to take part in many of the fascinating birding trips, such as to the Marlborough Sounds, Farewell Spit, Stephens Island, Kapiti Island; banding trips to Jack Taylor's farm near Ward, Nga Manu and Lake Pukepūke; and exploring many Wairarapa birding haunts, especially near Lake Wairarapa and nearby wetlands.

As well as the birds seen and studied, being involved in these trips and attending several AGMs has enabled him to make friends with many OSNZers from all over New Zealand. He is very much looking forward to renewing many of these friendships at the 1993 AGM.

Robert Cushman Murphy Prize and Kai Curry-Lindahl Award

The Colonial Waterbird Society is pleased to announce that its Executive Committee has voted to recognise, potentially annually, international and global significant accomplishments in two complementary areas involving colonially breeding waterbirds.

The **Robert Cushman Murphy Prize** will highlight either a lifetime of exceptional, published research, or a single extraordinary research accomplishment that resulted in a major redirection of study of waterbirds. It honours the memory of one of the giants in the field, the author of *Oceanic Birds of South America*, a landmark first published in 1936 and still an essential reference.

The **Kai Curry-Lindahl Award** will call attention to either a lifetime of singular efforts on behalf of the conservation or management of colonially breeding waterbirds and their habitat, or to one outstanding example of such activity that has begun to serve as a model for future workers. It is named for one of the early pioneers in the conservation of vast areas of critical importance to freshwater colonial birds, not only in his native Europe but in Africa and Asia as well.

Each award carries an honorarium of \$US1,000 plus up to \$US1,500 in travel funds to attend the annual meeting of the Colonial Waterbird Society at which will be made. Each awardee will be expected to present a plenary lecture on the work leading to the award, and is encouraged to submit a complementary manuscript for consideration by Colonial Waterbirds.

Third-party nominations are invited for individuals whose work meets the above standards. Please submit as detailed a statement as possible of candidates' qualifications, with a full listing of their publications or other objective evidence of their accomplishments, for evaluation by an international committee. Nominations should reach the USA no later than 1 May 1993. Please direct material to Dr P.A. Buckley, US National Park Service Coastal Research Center, Box 8, Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett, RI 02882, USA.

Mystery Bird # 10

As with Mystery Bird # 3 (*OSNZ news* 59), last issue's mystery bird should have been recognised as a wader, the stout thickened bill showing it to be a plover. The upperparts are a smooth (presumably) grey-brown, with abrasion to the feathers causing them to appear slightly pale edged. Fresh juvenile plumages typically have well defined paler edges to the feathering, so our bird is at least in 1st-winter plumage (which replaces the juvenile plumage relatively rapidly), or is an adult. The lack of bands or colouration on the breast and underparts show that the bird is in non-breeding plumage.

Structurally, the bird is quite large (compared with the cockle shells), rather stocky, large-headed, with a thickset bill (which could appear longer if it was in profile and not angled towards the camera). It has a white 'front' above the bill, narrow white supercilium (eyestripe), and a large grey-brown area around the eye and on the ear coverts. This is separated from the bill by a smudgy pale area. A fairly extensive breast band ends rather diffusely towards the centre of the breast, and there is some flecking between the tail and the wing. The greyish legs are of average length only.

The larger *Pluvialis* plovers (Pacific and American Golden Plovers and Grey Plover) are ruled out immediately by the plain upperparts, as all of these have spangled upperparts. Certain of the smaller plovers on the New Zealand list are obviously not in contention – Shore Plover adults are unmistakable, and juveniles have a much larger supercilium and well-marked upperparts; Black-fronted Dotterel and Red-kneed Dotterels (the latter recorded only once in NZ) even as juveniles never have a white supercilium and 'front'; Red-capped Dotterel never has extensive breast



tabs and is a small bird; Oriental Dotterel is a very leggy elongate bird.

Banded Dotterels have a smaller bill and would probably show something of two breast bands. This leaves three possibilities - Mongolian Dotterel, Large Sand Dotterel, and New Zealand Dotterel. The bill size is slightly too large and the bird seems too bulky for a Mongolian Dotterel. The bill could fit Large Sand Dotterel, but that is a very long-legged species, unlike our bird. The breast tabs of both Mongolian and Large Sand Dotterels are generally well-defined, in contrast to the mystery bird. This leaves us with the correct answer - New Zealand Dotterel.

While the New Zealand Dotterel is a familiar bird to many in the northern North Island, those living elsewhere may encounter it only infrequently, Stewart Island having the only other major breeding population. New Zealand Dotterels regularly turn up at Farewell Spit, leading to suspicions of a small breeding population in the NW Nelson mountains. Recent records of both northern and southern banded birds in the Manawatu and Nelson regions show that birds can wander widely, so perhaps Farewell Spit is harbouring offshoot birds from the major (distant) breeding areas.

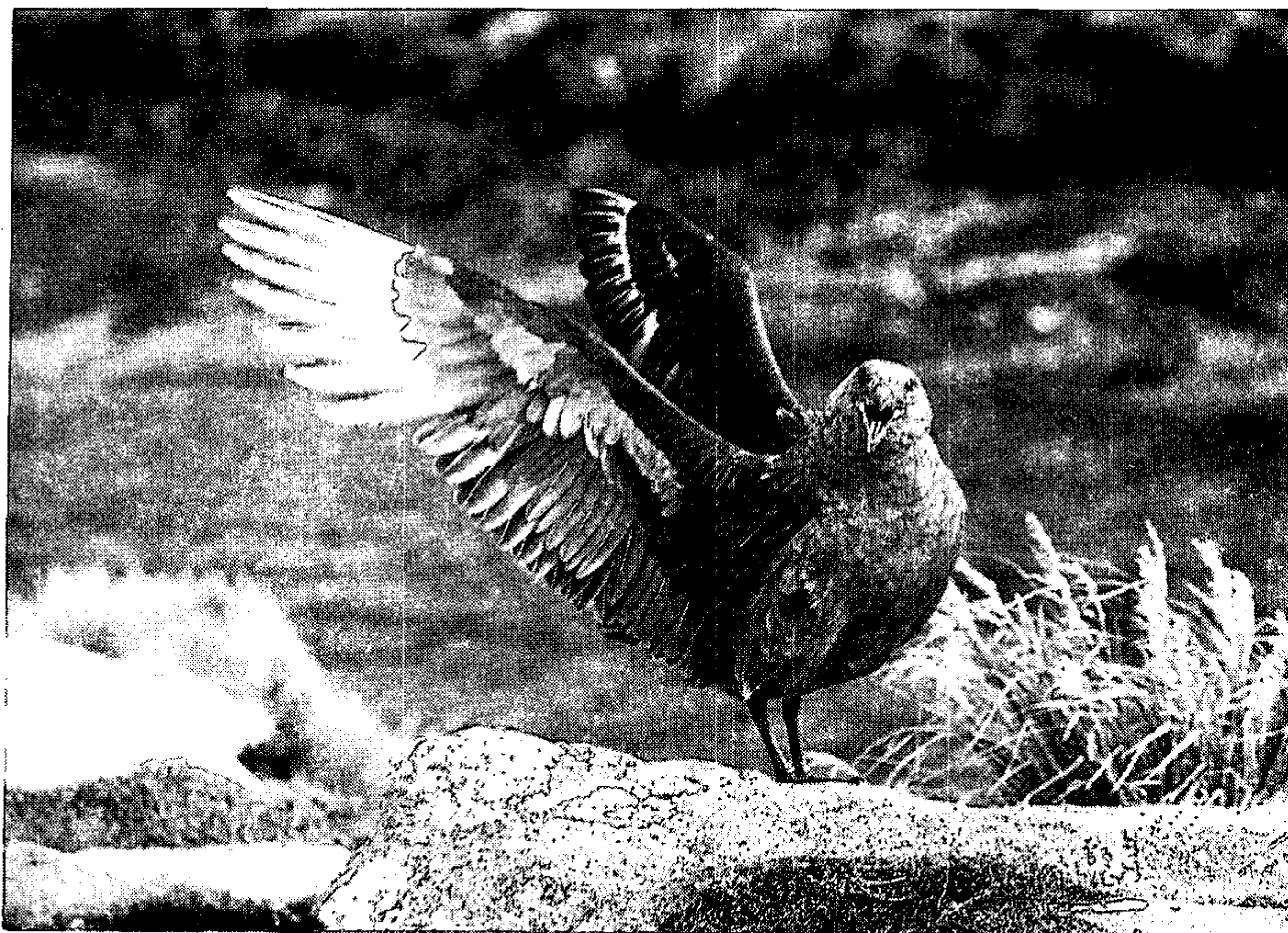
PHIL BATTLE

Plumage of the Little Cormorant

The Little Cormorant made a good choice for Mystery Bird # 9 and the notes by Phil Battley (*OSNZ news 65*, December 1992) to explain its identification are admirable.

On one point the article is misleading because when discussing the pied form of the Little Cormorant it states that when in juvenile plumage they are all dark. In fact, the juvenile birds can be either all dark (in which case they become white-throated when the adult plumage develops) or they can be pied i.e. whitebreasted, in which case they retain this appearance as adults.

This aspect of the plumage is seldom made clear in field guides, but it emerged



Mystery Bird # 11

Identify this bird. Answer next issue.

from a prolonged study of a nesting colony reported in *Notornis 34*: 41-50 (1987); see Figure 2 of that account. The pairing of white-throated adults produced black feathered young and that of pied adults gave pied young, but where crossing of the forms was involved the offspring might be dark or pied. On a few occasions I was able to see pied and all dark siblings in the same brood and to follow their development until they left the colony.

Incidentally, the colony concerned, at Hobson Bay, Auckland, which held about 50 pairs in the early 1980s has not been used for several years and the Little Cormorant is now quite scarce in this region. Displacement by Pied Cormorants seemed to have some influence on the fate of the Hobson Bay colony. The larger birds have now also abandoned this site and the trees (pohutukawas) have completely recovered from the tinning out they had received.

MICHAEL TAYLOR

National Wader Counts - 1992

During June and November 1992 members completed the 9th winter and 10th summer national wader counts. The 10 years of efforts by Society members to produce such a valuable long-term set of information about our waders is a highlight in the achievements of cooperative bird studies in New Zealand.

Here I present a preliminary report about the national wader counts conducted during 1992. Thanks to all those who organised and participated in these counts, and to those who responded so promptly to my requests for information.

Winter

As for previous winter counts members were asked to record the numbers of NZ-breeding species (most of which are concentrated at coastal sites at this time of year) and those of overwintering migrants.

Good coverage was achieved, although Rangaunu, a major site in the Far North, was not counted, and no reports were received from Taranaki and Wanganui. It was particularly pleasing to receive counts from Parengarenga and Kaipara Harbours, two important sites which require a lot of effort and dedication to survey.

The 9th national winter wader count was completed during June and July 1992 and resulted in 133 850 waders of 25 species being counted.

Distribution: Localities where more than 1000 waders were counted are listed in Table 1. As in all previous counts the general pattern of distribution was that most waders were concentrated at four main sites - Manukau Harbour, Firth of Thames, Kaipara Harbour, and Farewell Spit. Once again, the number of waders recorded at Manukau Harbour was thousands more than those recorded at any other site.

Total numbers: A summary of wader totals by region is given in Table 2. As in previous years Pied Oystercatchers made up most of the birds counted, and in order of abundance they were followed by Pied

TABLE 1. Localities where more than 1000 waders were counted in June/July 1992.

Location	Number of waders counted
Manukau Harbour	34868
Firth of Thames	19248
Kaipara Harbour	16188
Farewell Spit	14090
Parengarenga Harbour	6170
Lake Ellesmere	3447
Motueka Estuary	3368
Whangarei Harbour	3328
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	3072
Golden Bay	2661
Kawhia Harbour	1896
Waimea Estuary	1684
Awarua Bay	1513
Tauranga Harbour	1510
Lake Wairarapa	1263
Nelson Haven	1191
Whakaki	1169
Ohope/Ohiwa	1130

Stilts, Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots, Banded Dotterels, Wrybills, Variable Oystercatchers, and Turnstones.

The numbers of NZ-breeding species all fell within the ranges of previous counts. The 80 911 Pied Oystercatchers and 7881 Banded Dotterels counted are slightly above the average totals for these species recorded during previous counts. Despite the renewed coverage of Kaipara Harbour the Wrybill total (3822) is still below the 4000-5000 birds estimated during the 1960s. Does this mean that the population of this endemic species has declined in recent years?

Of the remaining NZ-breeding species the numbers of Variable Oystercatchers and NZ Dotterels were similar to those recorded in previous years. However, these should not be taken as an indication of the total populations of these species because they do not congregate at estuaries and harbours to the same extent as do other species, but remain widely scattered on sandy beaches which generally are not covered during this series of counts.

Of the 121 Black-fronted Dotterels counted in Canterbury, 115 were on the Ashburton River. This is about the same number that were recorded on the Ashburton during winter 1991, so the trend of doubling their numbers each year on this river has not continued.

Record numbers of overwintering Lesser Knots and Turnstones were recorded during 1992. For Lesser Knots this follows the record summer total (67 367) made during November/December 1991; the previous highest winter count of this species was 7145 in 1989. The situation with Turnstones is not so easy to explain. The November/December 1991 total (3099) for this species was one of the lowest recorded. However, no counts were recorded from Southland during that period and as that is one of the major regions for this species then obviously the national total could have been considerably higher.

TABLE 2 — Waders counted in New Zealand, June 1992.

	Far North N'Land	Auckland S'Auck.	Waikato	BOP	Gisborne Waioia	Hawkes Bay	Manawatu	Wellington	Wairarapa	Marlboro'	Nelson	West Coast	Can'ty	Otago	S'land	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	14426	35738	2251	1032	54	7	11	56	4	7	18914	711	3970	2276	1454	80911
Variable Oystercatcher	513	81	10	301	44	21	-	116	8	13	321	50	39	143	43	1703
Spur-winged Plover	156	75	-	124	230	98	-	21	171	-	-	-	-	-	-	875*
NZ Dotterel	156	80	2	106	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	358
Banded Dotterel	1741	451	282	389	60	109	48	25	76	35	990	111	2815	263	486	7881
Mongolian Dotterel	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Large Sand Dotterel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Black-I-Dotterel	-	-	-	4	1	64	-	3	29	-	-	-	121	-	-	223
Wrybill	518	3091	-	83	18	71	4	-	-	-	30	-	7	-	-	3822
Far Eastern Curlew	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
Asiatic Whimbrel	20	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	27
American Whimbrel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	5
Whimbrel spp.	1	4	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	-	14
Bar-tailed Godwit	1753	5356	76	751	92	116	12	-	-	-	2700	13	198	283	321	11671
Hudsonian Godwit	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Tattler sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	3
Terek Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Turnstone	684	201	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	74	277	-	7	-	245	1496
Lesser Knot	2630	5185	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	236	-	-	-	137	8188
Sharp-t Sandpiper	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	9
Curlew Sandpiper	32	37	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	1	88
Red-necked Stint	4	5	-	-	-	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	28	-	-	45
Pied Stilt	4492	5423	75	454	1194	758	180	107	975	52	494	76	1089	462	680	16511
Black/Hybrid Stilt	-	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	11
Grey Phalarope	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	27126	55746	2698	3249	1704	1247	261	328	1263	182	23979	961	8298	3427	3381	133850

*Spur-winged Plovers are widespread and common in the South Island.

Species distributions: As in all previous winter counts the harbours and estuaries of the Northland, Auckland/South Auckland and Nelson regions were the most important wintering grounds for Pied Oystercatchers; over 44% of the Pied Oystercatchers counted were in Auckland/South Auckland, over 23% were in Nelson, and over 17% were in Northland. The highest counts of Pied Oystercatchers were 22 356 at Manukau Harbour, 12 409 at the Firth of Thames, 11 985 at Kaipara Harbour, and 10 883 at Farewell Spit.

Pied Stilts also congregated in the northern half of the North Island with over 32% of the total counted in Auckland/South Auckland and over 27% in the Far North/Northland. The highest counts of Pied Stilts were 2744 at Manukau Harbour, 2481 at the Firth of Thames, 2393 at Kaipara Harbour, and 1200 at Parengarenga Harbour.

Banded Dotterels favoured Lake Ellesmere - 2502, Parengarenga Harbour - 1100+, Farewell Spit - 447, and Awarua Bay - 409. The main concentrations of Wrybills were at the Firth of Thames - 1700, Manukau Harbour - 1391, Kaipara Harbour - 222, Parengarenga - 130, and Whangarei Harbour - 113.

... and summer 1992

The 10th national summer wader count was completed during November 1992, when 180 416 birds of 30 species were counted. Once again there was good coverage of coastal areas throughout the

country, the only major sites to miss being counted were Rangaunu and Houhora in the Far North; no report was received from Taranaki.

As for previous summer counts, participants were asked to pay particular attention to migratory waders from the Northern Hemisphere and, whenever possible, also to count NZ-breeding species. The following is a preliminary report of the count.

Distribution: Localities where more than 1000 waders were counted are listed in Table 3. As found in all previous counts the general pattern in summer is that most migratory waders are concentrated in the north (Parengarenga to Kawhia and the Bay of Plenty), Nelson and Southland.

More than 10 000 waders were recorded again from Manukau Harbour, Kaipara Harbour, Farewell Spit, the Firth of Thames, and Parengarenga Harbour; these remain the only sites from which 10 000 waders have been counted since the inaugural summer count in 1983.

Total numbers: A summary of wader totals by region is given in Table 4. Once again Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots made up the majority of birds counted and the order of abundance of the top five migratory species remained the same as in most previous years i.e. Bar-tailed Godwit, Lesser Knot, Turnstone, Golden Plover and Red-necked Stint.

The total of 86 139 Bar-tailed Godwits is the second highest recorded for this species during this series of counts; the highest total of godwits (101 701) was

TABLE 3. Localities where more than 1000 waders were counted during November 1992.

Location	Number of waders counted
Manukau Harbour	42888
Kaipara Harbour	29265
Farewell Spit	25242
Firth of Thames	15446
Parengarenga Harbour	12621
Whangarei Harbour	6717
Kawhia Harbour	5185
Tauranga Harbour	4847
Ohope/Ohiwa	3469
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	2866
Waimea Estuary	2556
Invercargill Estuary	2403
Motueka Estuary	2313
Lake Wairarapa	2249
Lake Ellesmere	2028
Golden Bay	1816
Awarua Bay	1214
Westhaven inlet	1073
Kaituna Cut	1048
Nelson Haven	1043

recorded in 1988 and 85 666 were recorded in 1991. The total for Lesser Knots (59 423) is above average for this species.

Numbers of Turnstones bounced back after several years of low counts and this summer's total of 5427 was the highest recorded since 1984, when a record 5922 were counted. Totals for Golden Plover and Red-necked Stint both fell within the ranges of counts obtained in previous years.

Most NZ-breeding species would still be widely dispersed over their breeding range during the period of this count, so only a proportion of the total populations of these would have been counted during this survey.

Species distribution: As in previous years Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots favoured the harbours and estuaries of the Far North/Northland, Auckland/South Auckland, Bay of Plenty, and Nelson regions. Highest counts of Bar-tailed Godwits were recorded at Manukau Harbour - 15 438, Farewell Spit - 13 845, Kaipara Harbour - 13 252, Firth of Thames - 7955, Kawhia Harbour - 4180, Tauranga Harbour - 4095, Parengarenga Harbour - 4000, Ohope/Ohiwa - 3320, Whangarei Harbour - 2467, Avon-Heathcote Estuary - 1902, Waimea Estuary - 1600, and Invercargill Estuary - 1150. Lesser Knots favoured Manukau Harbour - 20 569, Kaipara Harbour - 12 651, Farewell Spit - 9206, Parengarenga Harbour - 7000, Whangarei Harbour - 4010, and the Firth of Thames - 3403.

Turnstones were more evenly spread throughout the country with good numbers in northern, central and southern regions. Highest counts of Turnstones were at Parengarenga - 1500, Farewell Spit - 826, Manukau Harbour - 736, Invercargill Estuary - 606, Motueka Estuary - 334, and Tauranga Harbour - 200.

TABLE 4 — Waders counted in New Zealand, November 1992.

	Far North N.Land	Auckland S.Auck.	Waikato	BOP	Gisborne Waikato	Hawkes Bay	Wanganui	Manawatu	Wellington	Wairarapa	Marlboro	Nelson	West Coast	Canly	Otago	S'land	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	2312	8223	1160	217	1	24	-	3	50	8	15	2849	367	1300	1070	587	18186
Variable Oystercatcher	122	20	2	275	14	19	2	-	8	7	14	161	36	16	72	10	778
Golden Plover	49	34	-	57	31	-	-	21	-	4	-	11	-	36	-	8	251
Grey Plover	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Spur-winged Plover	24	-	12	73	17	78	14	-	42	1495	-	-	-	-	-	-	1755
NZ Dotterel	67	21	5	98	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	197
Banded Dotterel	9	5	1	20	17	26	2	-	21	6	24	103	12	682	14	18	960
Black-f. Dotterel	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Wrybill	15	191	-	-	-	6	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	225
Far Eastern Curlew	4	7	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	1	-	-	22
Asiatic Whimbrel	52	16	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	75
American Whimbrel	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Whimbrel spp.	39	25	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	-	1	-	-	100
Bar-tailed Godwit	19828	23393	4734	8502	556	772	16	400	-	34	1	19647	670	2611	2541	2434	86139
Black-t. Godwit	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Sib. Tattler	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Tattler sp.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	3	-	9
Greenshank	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Terek Sandpiper	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Turnstone	2119	778	-	221	-	3	-	-	-	-	96	1160	-	1	-	1049	5427
Lesser Knot	23761	23972	4	441	7	14	7	414	-	20	-	10066	22	100	-	595	59423
Sharp-t. Sandpiper	7	13	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	17	-	-	-	7	-	-	48
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Broad-b. Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Curlew Sandpiper	30	45	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	-	33	-	2	136
Red-necked Stint	20	7	-	2	-	11	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	64	-	49	161
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Pied Stilt	616	1580	98	166	195	327	62	23	112	657	55	34	65	1651	507	349	6497
Black Stilt	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	49080	58334	6016	10085	846	1288	104	869	234	2249	239	34071	1172	6519	4204	5106	180416

*Spur-winged Plovers are widespread and common in the South Island.

Golden Plovers favoured, Kaituna Cut/Maketu Estuary - 48, Lake Ellesmere - 36, Kaipara Harbour - 33, Manukau Harbour - 30, Wairoa Estuary - 22, Manawatu Estuary - 21, and Farewell Spit - 11. Red-necked Stints were found mainly at Lake Ellesmere - 64, Awarua Bay - 49, Parengarenga Harbour - 15, and Porangahau Estuary - 11.

Among the rarer migratory waders favoured sites were: Curlew Sandpipers - Firth of Thames 36, Lake Ellesmere 33, Parengarenga Harbour 30, and Lake Grassmere 22; Sharp-tailed Sandpipers - Lake Wairarapa 17, Manukau Harbour 9, Kaipara Harbour 7, and Lake Ellesmere 6; whimbrel - Parengarenga 52, Kaipara Harbour 39, Farewell Spit 29, and Firth of Thames 25.

There were 1495 Spur-winged Plovers at Lake Wairarapa, a huge total for this relatively recent arrival in the region.

Now is the time to register your interest as a wader counter with your local organiser. Don't leave all the fun to others - join now!

PAUL SAGAR
Coordinator, National Wader Counts



RAOU
BIRDS • KNOWLEDGE • CONSERVATION

RAOU Column

A new Director for the RAOU

There have been a few changes at Head Office. Our Director of nearly four years, Dr Philip Moors, left in November 1992 to take up a position as Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Under Philip the RAOU experienced a period of unparalleled growth and we now have offices in three states and employ more than 20 full-time staff. Projects such as the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB)* and the Australian Bird Count came to fruition under Philip's leadership and are now well-established.

The new Director of the RAOU is Dr David Baker-Gabb. Originally from New Zealand, David joins us from the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Unit of the Victorian Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. David has had a long

association with the RAOU. From 1984-87 he studied and prepared a Management Plan for the Plains wanderer. In 1988-89 David studied Red Goshawks in the Northern Territory and with Tom Aumann prepared The Ecology and Status of the Red Goshawk in Northern Australia. He has run courses at RAOU observatories and designed and co-ordinated BOP (Bird of Prey) Watch. During the five years of BOP Watch 350 participants filled in 26 000 record sheets; the results have given us a better understanding of the patterns of movement and areas of concentration of Australian raptors.

We welcome David to his new position.

Conservation

The RAOU has an urgent brief to deal with conservation issues as they arise. The RAOU Conservation Committee has reconvened in Melbourne and we have appointed a part-time Conservation Officer, Hugo Phillipps.

Threatened and Extinct Birds of Australia, published last year and launched by Bill Oddie in June, has now sold out and is being reprinted. Sadly, this book lists 150 species and subspecies of birds that are threatened in Australia.

Recently the RAOU has been involved in the debate over the use of lead shot in duck-hunting. The effects of lead poisoning on wildlife are well-documented in Australia and other countries. In Victoria, where duck-hunting is most popular, it has been estimated that 200 tonnes of lead is deposited in waterways each year; in one study 37% of Blue-billed Ducks (a fully protected non-game species) were found to be suffering from lead ingestion. Apart from game birds, raptors and mammalian predators are affected when they prey upon injured or debilitated birds.

Steel, or soft-iron is an acceptable alternative and its use is mandatory on certain wetlands in South Australia and the Northern Territory; lead is being phased out in America and Europe. With the start of the 1993 duck hunting season imminent, the RAOU has been vocal in this matter.

1994 Birds of Australasia Calendar

The RAOU has been producing a full-colour photographic calendar featuring birds for some years now. Last year we asked members of the OSNZ to submit material for consideration and once again we welcome any input from you; by the time this issue goes to press, we will be ready to select photos for the 1994 calendar.

DAVID ANDREW

Changes in the Checklist – 2

Shearwaters, Diving Petrels, Fulmars, Prions, Gadfly Petrels, Storm Petrels (continued)

Pterodroma neglecta – Kermadec Petrel, now *P. neglecta neglecta*. *Pterodroma solandri* – Bird of Providence, now Providence Petrel. *Pterodroma magentae* – Chatham Island Taiko, now Magenta Petrel (Chatham Island Taiko). *Oceanodroma leucorhoa leucorhoa* – Leach's Fork-tailed Petrel, now Leach's Storm Petrel. *Oceanites oceanicus oceanicus* – Wilson's Storm Petrel, now *O. oceanicus exasperatus*. *Garrodia neries* – Grey-backed Storm Petrel, now *Oceanites nereis*. *Pelagodroma marina maoriana* – White-faced Storm Petrel, now New Zealand White-faced Storm Petrel. *Fregatta grallaria* – White-bellied Storm Petrel, now *F. grallaria grallaria*.

Penguins

Pygoscelis papua – Gentoo Penguin, now *P. papua papua* Northern Gentoo Penguin. *Pygoscelis antarctica* – Chinstrap Penguin, now Chinstrap (Ringed) Penguin. *Eudyptula minor* – Northern Blue Penguin, now Blue Penguin. Note: *E. minor minor* and *E. albosignata* now placed in one taxon *E. minor*. *Eudyptes crestatus* – Rockhopper Penguin, now *E. chrysocome* (there are three subspecies). *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus pachyrhynchus* – Fiordland Crested Penguin, now *E. pachyrhynchus*. *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus atratus* – Snares Crested Penguin, now *E. robustus*. *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus sclateri* – Erect-crested Penguin, now *E. sclateri*.

Pelicans, Gannets, Cormorants and Allies

Phaethon rubricauda roseotincta – Red-tailed Tropic Bird, now *P. rubricauda* Red-tailed Tropicbird. *Sula bassana serrator* – Australian Gannet, now *Morus serrator* Australasian Gannet. *Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae* – Black Shag, now also known as Black Cormorant, Great Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax varius varius* – Pied Shag, now also known as Pied Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* – Little Black Shag, now also known as Little Black Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris* – Little Shag, now also known as Little Pied Cormorant. *Leucocarbo carunculatus carunculatus* – King Shag, now *L. carunculatus* New Zealand King Shag. *Leucocarbo carunculatus chalconotus* – Stewart Island Shag, now *L. chalconotus* Stewart Island Shag, Bronze Shag. *Leucocarbo carunculatus onslowi* – Chatham Island Shag, now *L. onslowi*. *Leucocarbo cambelli colensoi* – Auckland Island Shag, now *L. colensoi*. *Leucocarbo campbelli campbelli* – Campbell Island Shag, now *L. campbelli*. *Leucocarbo albiventer purpurascens* – MacQuarie Island

Shag, now *L. atriceps purpurascens*. *Stictocarbo punctatus featherstoni* – Pitt Island Shag, now *S. featherstoni*.

Darters

Anhinga rufa novaehollandiae – Australian Darter, now *A. melano-gaster rufa* – Darter.

Frigate Birds

Fregata minor – Greater Frigate Bird, now Greater Frigatebird. *Fregata ariel ariel* – Lesser Frigatebird.

Hérons, Ibises, Storks and Allies

Ardea novaehollandiae – White-faced Heron, now *A. novaehollandiae novaehollandiae*. *Egretta alba modesta* – White Heron, now also known as White Egret. *Egretta garzetta immaculata* – Little Egret, now *E. garzetta nigripes*. *Egretta sacra sacra* – Reef Heron, now also known as Blue Heron. *Botaurus stellaris poiciloptilus* – Australian Bittern, now *B. poiciloptilus* Australasian Bittern. *Ixobrychus minutus novaehollandiae* – Little Bittern, now *I. novaezelandiae* – New Zealand Little Bittern. *Plegadis falcinellus peregrinus* – Glossy Ibis, now *P. falcinellus*. *Threkiornis molucca* – Australian White Ibis, now *T. molucca strictipennis*. *Platalea leucorodia regia* – Royal Spoonbill, now *P. regia*.

DOUG BOOTH

Seabirds in the Hauraki Gulf

Since April 1992 I have made counts of seabirds in the Hauraki Gulf, from one-day return ferry trips (n = 5) and one-day one-way barge trips (n = 12) to Great Barrier Island. Both trips go to Tryphena in the south of the island, returning from Fitzroy in the north (on the following day with the barges). All birds seen were counted in a half circle in front of the vessels.

The 17 trips (all over the April-November 1992 period) have yielded sightings of over 116 000 birds of 39 species. The common species (1000+ seen) have been Fluttering Shearwater, Gannet, Buller's Shearwater, Flesh-footed Shearwater, White-fronted Tern, and Red-billed Gull – Fluttering Shearwaters exceeded 88 000 and Gannets 14 600 seen.

Birds were most common in April and May, with most species recorded in April and November. As well as showing the disappearance of migratory shearwaters to the northern hemisphere, the counts have shown the decline (to zero at times) of Fluttering Shearwaters over the August to November period; increased numbers of Diving and Grey-faced Petrels and Little Shearwaters over late April to mid May; large numbers of skuas (53 of 4 species); the presence of White-faced Storm Petrels

from September on; and the occurrence of Cookilaria petrels and Spotted Shag in November.

Among the more interesting species seen have been (*, unconfirmed) - Pomarine Skua (9), Long-tailed Skua (3*), South Polar Skua (1*), Thin-billed Prion (1), Kerguelen Petrel (3), Whiteheaded Petrel (1), Cape Pigeon (5), Yellow-nosed Mollymawk (5), Black-browed Mollymawk (1), Wilson's Storm Petrel (1*), Northern Giant Petrel (1), Juan Fernandez Petrel (3*), Black Petrel (5), Cook's Petrel (118), Pycroft's Petrel (2*), Black-winged Petrel (4), White-bellied Storm Petrel (1*), and Stejneger's Petrel (1*).

Also seen have been six species of whale and dolphin - Common Dolphin (313), Bottlenose Dolphin (35), Killer Whale (10), Bryde's Whale (15), Minke Whale (1), and Spotted Dolphin (1*). The latter will be New Zealand's 3rd record, if confirmed.

The Hauraki Gulf and its islands contain a high diversity of bird species - my list for Great Barrier Island is 59 species, out of a Gulf total of 101. I am sure there are more if the complete Gulf area (including harbours and coastline) is taken into consideration. This enormous diversity and abundance of birds indicates the regional, national, and perhaps international importance of the Hauraki Gulf - a great place for birdwatching.

CHRIS JOWETT

Further White-fronted Tern nesting colony in North Taranaki

Until recently, the only known breeding colonies of White-fronted Terns in North Taranaki were certain of the Sugarloaves at New Plymouth. On 19 December 1992, Bob Talbot found a group of these birds nesting on one of the several offshore stacks in the vicinity of the mouth of the Tongaporutu River. The birds were nesting on the steep, sparsely vegetated inland facing upper part of the stack, some of them at the entrances of petrel burrows not then in use.



On 1 January 1993 Bob Talbot and I visited the site again. Some 20 adult terns were in attendance as well as about 12 variously sized chicks at the pre-flying stage. It is quite possible that this stack has been used for some time as a breeding site which has gone unnoticed until now.

DAVID MEDWAY

Update on Hawkes Bay nesting of South Island Pied Oystercatcher

Since a note was prepared for *Notornis* 30: 3 (1983), South Island Pied Oystercatchers have again attempted to nest on the Ngaruroro River, Hawkes Bay. In 1986, we found two pairs breeding on the same section of river, each nest containing two eggs. The outcome of these is uncertain as we were unable to find any young birds, even though the adults were in the vicinity. Two other pairs were seen a short distance upriver by other observers; these birds showed breeding behaviour, but no nests were found.

On 28 November 1992 we discovered another oystercatcher nest, this time with one egg. The nest site was rather an unfortunate choice, being very close to a large Black-backed Gull colony. The egg looked newly laid, so we left it until 17 December before making another check. At this stage both adults were skulking about, but the nest was empty. Further observation did not reveal any new site. The lateness of this attempted breeding is on account of frequent flooding of Hawkes Bay rivers.

WAYNE & MARGARET TWYDLE

"Kraka" times at Karaka

Over the years, the Karaka Shellbanks on the Manukau Harbour have turned up many rare and interesting species and this summer has proved to be no exception.

Unfortunately, access has to be gained through private farmland and so the area is not as frequently visited as Miranda, on the Firth of Thames. However, during late December and January I made five trips to the Karaka high tide roost. These trips were usually with Tony Habraken and/or Des and Pam Agnew, but Anthea Goodwin, John & Stella Rowe and others also visited the roost.

The main attraction was a Broad-billed Sandpiper, located by Tony Habraken and I on 27 December 1992. This bird was present throughout January and looks as though it is settled in for the summer.

On these regular visits a wide variety of other interesting birds were also located as the following summary of the "best" tally for each species shows: Bar-tailed Godwit 3000, Lesser Knot 4000, Pied Oystercatcher 2000, NZ Dotterel 9, Banded Dotterel 78, Mongolian Dotterel

1, Wrybill 233, Pacific Golden Plover 28, Grey Plover 1, Turnstone 250, Curlew Sandpiper 24, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 13, Broad-billed Sandpiper 1, Terek Sandpiper 2, Red-necked Stint 15, Long-billed Curlew 5, whimbrel spp. 2, Black-billed Gull 49, Eastern Little Tern 19.

Any members wishing to visit the Karaka Shellbanks should contact the property owner, or a South Auckland member for information regarding access.

This has been the first season for many years that access has been relatively freely given and the situation is still somewhat tenuous.

DAVID LAWRIE

Introducing the OSNZ news Book Review Column

With the increasing number of books received for review, the Council decided that a column containing book reviews and information on recent books be established in OSNZ news. The frequency of the column will depend on the number of books received.

Reviews of books of scientific interest will continue to be reviewed in *Notornis*; books which are aimed at a wider readership, like popular bird books and field guides will be reviewed in OSNZ news. A third column - 'New Books in the OSNZ Library' - will list bibliographic data of books which were recently received by the Society and are available in the OSNZ Library. These books will not be reviewed further in either of the above columns.

Hopefully, these changes will help to provide our members with more up-to-date information on recent ornithological books.

DR GABOR L. LOVEI,
Book Reviews Editor

Book Review

The Falcon and the Lark, by Neville Peat, 1992. John McIndoe Limited, Dunedin. 143 pp. ISBN 0-86868-136-9. Price \$21.95 (paperback).

The Falcon and the Lark is a high country journal where the author returns to his ancestral home in the tussock country of Central Otago. The book is divided into winter and summer accounts of his wanderings with the life of the Falcon woven into the story. In Part 2 (summer) the life of the Falcon becomes a more prominent feature of the book as the author meets a pair through contact with the 'Lark', a wandering musterer at one with nature.

The descriptions of the Falcon hunting, flying and breeding are accurate and evocative. The author acknowledges Dr N.C. Fox's thesis *The biology of the NZ Falcon* (University of Canterbury, 1977) which probably accounts for the accuracy of the Falcon observations. The description

Mystery Bird Quiz

In recent years, some regions have introduced a twitchathon as a fun activity. The Mystery Bird Quiz falls into the same category - a fun activity. During 1993, each issue of *OSNZ news* will contain three pictures of birds. Most of these pictures will be sufficiently disguised so that positive identification will be virtually impossible. It then comes down to an educated guess.

The rules are simple:

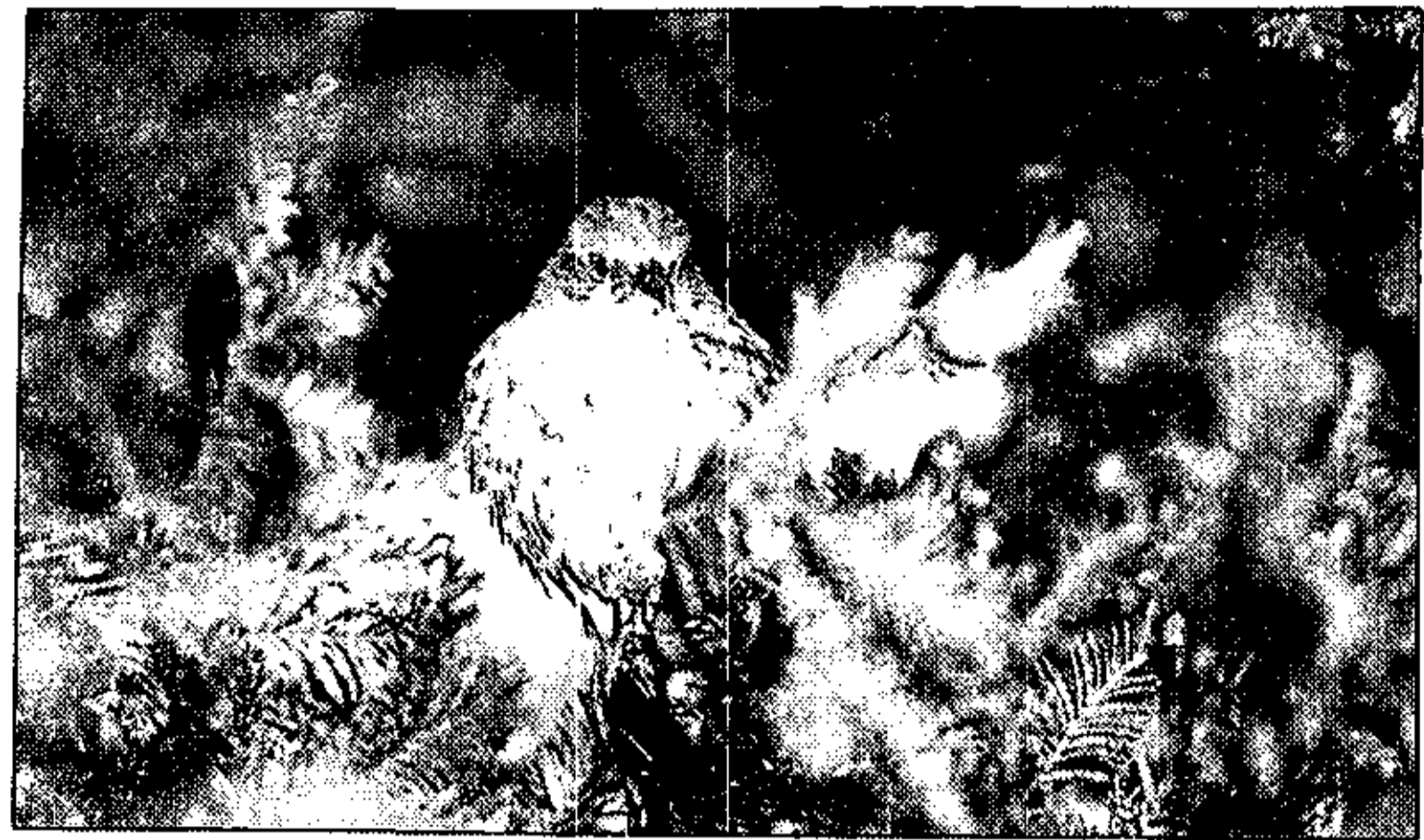
1. One guess only per person per picture.
2. Only paid up members of OSNZ are eligible to enter.
3. No correspondence will be entered into regarding identification of the bird or concerning the competition.
4. People attending the Canterbury region meetings are ineligible to enter. (They have seen some of the pictures.)
5. Entries must be received within the month of delivery of each newsletter i.e. end of April, July, and October 1993, and January 1994.
6. If no outright winner is found the persons with most correct answers shall be separated by drawing names out of a hat at the February 1994 meeting of the Canterbury region.
7. The name and address of the winner will be published in the March 1994 issue of *OSNZ news*.

A prize will be awarded to the winner, details of this will be announced in the June issue.

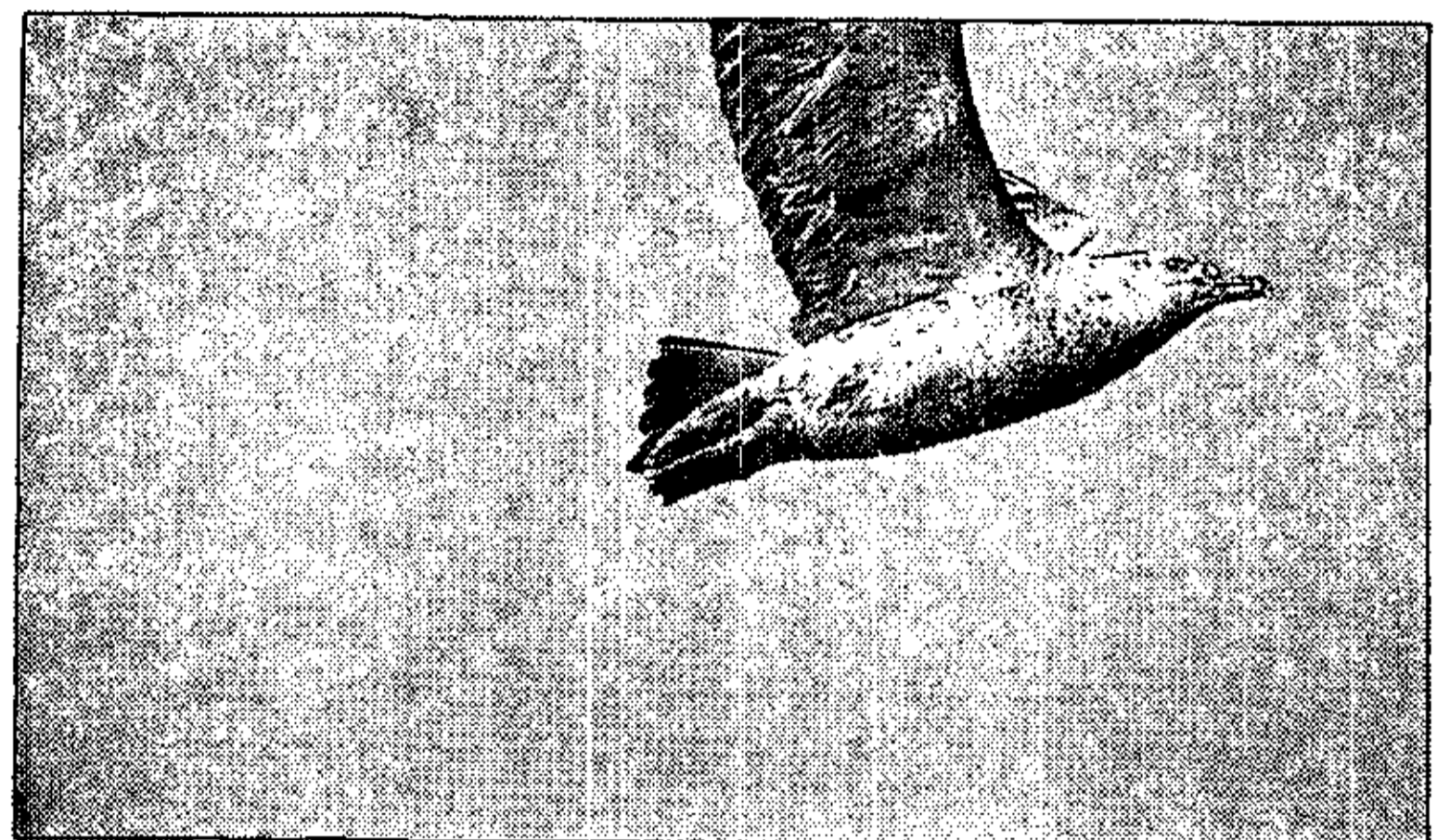
Entries should be sent to Don Hadden, 288 Yaldhurst Road, Christchurch 8004.

The first three photographs in this competition are presented above. Good luck!

DON HADDEN



A



B



C

of the Falcon flying with the 'Lark' hang-gliding is not as fanciful as it may first seem as New Zealand Falcons have been known to divebomb hang-gliders in defence of their territory.

The cover does not do justice to the book in illustrating what appear to be a Harrier, but fortunately there are two black and white photographs of Falcons within the book, so the reader is able to identify the Falcon.

Anyone with an interest in falcons or natural history in general will find this book enjoyable reading.

S.B. LAWRENCE

New Books in the OSNZ Library

Birds of the Strait of Gibraltar, by Clive Finlayson, 1992. T & AD Poyser, 534 pp. ISBN 0-85661-066-6 Price £27.00.

A detailed summary of the results of the author's long association with the bird life of Gibraltar. Pity about the sub-standard graphs, uncharacteristic of Poyser books.

Atlas des oiseaux de France en hiver, by D. Yeatman-Berthelot, 1991. Societe d'Ornithologie France, Paris, 575 pp. ISBN 2-9505440-0-2 Price: unknown.

The French wintering atlas. Nicely produced but out-of-date due to the long delay following Berthelot's death. Compiled by his wife.

A cabinet of reed-warblers, by L.M. Courtney-Haines, 1991. Surry Beatty & Sons Pty Ltd., Chipping Norton, NSW, 95 pp. ISBN 0-949324-39-6 (paper) Price A\$22.00.

A summary, although too short, of the biological information on all *Acrocephalus* reed-warblers. Does not do justice to our degree of understanding of their biology.

Checklist of Birds of Britain and Ireland, 6th edition, by the British Ornithologists' Union, 1992. British Ornithologists' Union, Tring, 50 pp. ISBN 0-907446-15-9. Price £5.95 inc. p & p.

The latest update of the British checklist.

The birds of Cyprus. An annotated checklist, by Peter R. Flint & Peter F. Stewart, 1992. British Ornithologists' Union Checklist No. 6. British Ornithologists' Union, Tring, 234 pp. ISBN 0-907446-14-0. Price £20.00 inc. p & p. (by surface mail). Well-produced book with numerous habitat photos, plus information on nature protection, migration, etc.

All BOU check-lists are obtainable from the British Ornithologists' Union, c/o The Zoological Museum, Sub-department of Ornithology, Tring, Herts HP23 6AP, UK.

Compiled by G. LOVEI

Recent Reports

This report covers the months of November to mid-February and is compiled from records from the Auckland, South Auckland, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, West Coast, and Otago regions – plus a few whispers through the skinny grapevine.

Note that some of these records have yet to be confirmed by the Rare Birds Committee.

Please send any records for the June OSNZ news to: Derek Onley, c/o Post Office Karitane, Otago. The deadline for this issue is 15 May.

Seabirds

The large wrecks of Little Blue Penguins and Diving Petrels on the Auckland east coast may have been associated with the notorious algal bloom – as in the past? On a more encouraging note a Diving Petrel heard on Mana Island (Wellington) was the first record for the island and Black-winged Petrels were present in the Hauraki Gulf during Jan.

A Chinstrap Penguin at Warrington (Otago) on 27 Nov. was thought to be the first record for the NZ mainland until someone unearthed a *Southland Times* report of one parading along an Invercargill street a few years back.

The November count of Little Black Shags in Hawkes Bay was 64, lower than usual, but 2 were present from Nov. to Jan. at Lakes Ryan and Karoro (West Coast) well away from their usual range.

Gannets arrived late at Cape Kidnappers (Hawkes Bay) and laying was delayed for about 5 weeks. Numbers continue to increase, however, and the breeding season was successful. Caspian Terns had a good season in the Auckland area and a colony at the Waikato R. mouth raised at least 88 chicks. In contrast, the breeding colonies at Invercargill were down by about half. The Black-billed Gulls in Hawkes Bay did not breed in the usual numbers and there were only 11 chicks at Waitangi in Dec. A few more than usual continue to hang around the Manukau Harbour (South Auckland) during summer – 28 were counted on 5 Dec.

After 100 monthly counts at L. Wairarapa, Black-fronted Terns were finally recorded there on 6 Feb. The 3 adults and 2 chicks were presumably part of the usual late summer dispersal up the east coast. 19 Little Terns were counted at Kidd's Karaka (South Auckland) on 27 Dec. November and December seem good months to see these terns.

Hérons etc

Small numbers of Royal Spoonbills stayed in the North Island over summer at Mangere, Miranda, Waikato R. mouth, Ahuriri (Hawkes Bay, and L. Wairarapa.

In Otago breeding numbers continue to increase at Green I. and the first nesting was recorded in Southland at the Invercargill Est. Bitterns were reported from the Ahuriri, E. Clive, L. Oingo and near Waitangi in Hawkes Bay, and from Cobden and the Ahuriri Valley on the West Coast.

A few Cattle Egrets turn up regularly in mid summer. This year groups of 3 and 5 were seen in South Otago during Dec. and Jan. Do these birds stay around and join the winter flocks? A Little Egret in breeding plumage at E. Clive over summer is probably the same bird that has been in the area since May 1992. A flock of 10 Glossy Ibis was at L. Ellesmere (Canterbury) from Nov. to mid Feb. and there was one at All Day Bay (Otago) on 6 Feb.

Waterfowl

Dabchicks bred this year at Wattle Down Ponds and Tuakau Ponds (South Auckland) and those at the South Kaipara ponds did well, possibly helped by the record rainfall. 2 Spotless Crakes were seen at L. Oingo (Hawkes Bay) on 24 Jan.

The 7 Plumed Whistling Ducks at Hokitika Sp stayed for 8 months and were last seen on 24 Nov. 2 Grey Teal there on 13 Feb. are almost as rare on the West Coast! Tuakau Ponds held 2 Brown Teal on 29 Dec. and a female Chestnut Teal stayed at Karitane from 14-18 Jan. Now that several more have been identified at the Manawatu Est. one wonders how many more are lurking amongst the Grey Teal. A Cape Barren Goose turned up at L. Okaihau (Kaipara H.) in Jan., one of several widely scattered occurrences over the last 2 years that are probably due to continued releases.

Waders

233 Wrybills had returned to Karaka by 16 Dec.

There were the usual scattered records of rarer waders. Most notable was a Little Stint at L. Ellesmere from at least 17-21 Feb.. There were 3 Japanese Snipe at L. Wairarapa from 21 Jan. to 6 Feb. The Greenshank in Hawkes Bay was last seen on 22 Nov. at the Ahuriri Est. A Broad-billed Sandpiper occurred for the second year running at the Manawatu Est. and another made an appearance at Kidd's Karaka on 27 Dec. and 16 Jan. 2 Great Knots were at Port Waikato (South Auckland) on 8 Nov.

Less unusual were - a Grey Plover and Mongolian Dotterel at Karaka in December; Terek Sandpipers at Miranda, Karaka, and the Ashley Est. (Canterbury); Pectoral Sandpipers at L. Wairarapa in Jan. Mangere SP in Dec. and L. Ellesmere in Feb.; Marsh Sandpipers at L. Wairarapa, the Kaipara Harbour and Aramoana (Otago); Asiatic Black-tailed

Godwits were recorded at Miranda and Mangere, and a Hudsonian Godwit was present at Mangere over the summer.

Others

A pair of Nankeen Kestrels reappeared yet again at Te Mata Peak (Hawkes Bay) on 26 Nov. They are either very old or breeding in the area! Also in Hawkes Bay, a Red-legged Partridge was seen at Blackhead on 21 Nov. – a rare sighting of birds released several years ago.

2 Galahs were still at Ponui I. (South Auckland) on 20 Nov. and a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo stayed at Paekakariki (Wellington) until late Dec.

Curlew Buntings were reported nesting in a Havelock North orchard in Nov. and Dec., one of the very few records from Hawkes Bay, and a male was singing at Waikouaiti (Otago) on 22 Jan, several kms south of the small population at Hampden.

DEREK ONLEY

Regional Roundup

Northland

1992 ended pleasantly with a BBQ at Jean Hawken's property, familiar territory to those of us who had mist-netted and banded passerines among the avocado trees in July.

Monthly beach patrols have continued on both the east and west coasts with no particularly interesting finds in the last three months. Numbers of birds recovered are low, as is expected at this time of year.

Over the past few weeks Tony Beauchamp has been monitoring the toxic algal blooms, which have affected shellfish and the birds that feed on them. To date the only reported incident was of a flock of Red-billed Gulls which became badly disorientated and died within 10 minutes of beginning to feed. The situation is being closely watched to see if further incidents such as this occur.

Audrey Williams and her team of six banded 115 Black-backed Gull fledglings at the Waipu Oxidation Ponds during December. There were five bands recovered during 1992, all within 25 kms of their natal colonies.

Guest speaker at our February meeting was Graham Wragg, who gave a fascinating illustrated talk about the scientific expedition to the Pitcairn Islands (see also OSNZ news 62 March 1992). A BBC film crew also visited Pitcairn and filmed a natural history programme. Richard Parrish recently took a similar film crew out to the Poor Knights to film sequences for the same programme.

Pat Miller and Don Pittham have just left for three months in Madagascar, so we look forward to some interesting slides/talks on their return.

(Lorna Simpkin)

South Auckland

With the help of David Lawrie and his canoe we re-visited the sand island at the mouth of the Waikato River in December and January to check on the Caspian Tern colony. NZ Dotterel, Variable Oystercatcher and the ubiquitous Black-backed Gulls were also rearing chicks in this safe area.

Interesting banding records, including our first Pied Oystercatcher from the MacKenzie Basin have kept enthusiasm for band spotting high.

At our first meeting for the year Tony Habraken showed slides of the endangered and very beautiful Bali Starling as well as fine shots of the less visited parts of Bali. David Lawrie had an excellent series of shots of the Great Knots first spotted by Pam & Des Agnew at Port Waikato, and he and Ray Clough showed us the identification features of the Broad-billed Sandpiper still present, after two weeks, at Kidds.

(Anthea Goodwin)

Waikato

The Miranda Naturalists Trust Centre was the venue for a wader watch weekend at the end of October. Good views were obtained of Bar-tailed Godwit and Lesser Knot (one with an orange leg flag), Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, and a solitary Long-billed Curlew. A Little Egret fishing in the stream at the limeworks gave plenty of opportunity for checking the key identification features. It liked to mud-paddle with one foot before darting to take fish, many of which were taken at the first stab of its bill; about 12 small fish were taken in half an hour.

Harbour counts at Kawhia and Aotea were completed in blustery conditions in mid November. A half grown NZ Dotterel chick seen on the Te Motu Sandbank is the first noted in the area for many years. Let's hope it fledged.

In November, Ray Pierce spoke about the Banded Dotterel and Pied Stilt projects, reminding members to check flocks for colour banded birds. The present Pied Stilt study is to focus on pair bonding, mate retention and family groups, but with trap shy adults we only managed to band chicks in our area this season.

A very happy end of year gathering was held at the Otorohanga Zoological Park, where we strolled through the aviaries which provide for close up observations. A pair of Saddlebacks feeding chicks created interest as did close views of migratory waders received from Bird Rescue in Auckland, and now held captive because injury prevents them from flying. After explaining the current breeding successes, curator Eric Fox led everyone to the Great Spotted Kiwi enclosure where a pair of birds were watched at ground level from an in-ground hide.

An Otorohanga resident reports an unusual bird seen in his orchard. From his excellent sketch and description it may be a Flame Robin from Australia. Further searches for the bird by OSNZ members and the orchardist unfortunately have been unsuccessful.

(Bev. Woolley)

Hawkes Bay

The November 1992 wader count was carried out in conjunction with a coastal survey with the Department of Conservation. We covered the coast from the Waikare Rivermouth in the north to Cape Turnagain in the south. Birds at Porangahau included 11 Red-necked Stints, 6 Wrybills and 273 Bar-tailed Godwits. A Little Egret was seen at East Clive and 2 Royal Spoonbills at the Ahuriri Estuary.

Our Christmas twitchathon was a bit of a washout, but one team ventured out. We had a meeting, followed by a barbecue, to round off the year.

In January, 10 members spent a week at the Miranda Naturalists' Trust Centre at the Firth of Thames. We watched waders at high tide and species seen included a Terek Sandpiper, a Siberian Tattler, about 40 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Red-necked Stint, Turnstones, Golden Plover, Lesser Knots, Bar-tailed Godwits, and Pied Oystercatchers. There were 4 Royal Spoonbills (one with colour bands) and other birds with bands or colour flags included several Lesser Knots, a Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilts and Bar-tailed Godwit. As well as spotting waders we also visited the Kauranga Valley at Thames and went up to a kauri reserve behind Miranda.

(Chris McRae)

Wanganui

Our November meeting was the last one for 1992 and we were treated to a very interesting talk by Graham Randle, about his trip to the Maki Forest at the head of the Waitra River to search for Kokako.

Graham Randle has announced that he is to leave Wanganui to take up an appointment with the Napier Council, therefore he is no longer able to be our RR. This has come as a great shock to us in Wanganui and he will be missed greatly. We wish him all the very best in his new appointment. Tom Teasdale will be the new RR.

(Tom Teasdale)

Wellington

1993 got off to a good start in Wellington, with our summer newsletter offering a comprehensive programme for the year. There are lots of interesting evening meetings to come and many field trips to take advantage of.

1992 ended with a twitchathon held in

such appalling weather that only two teams braved the elements. It was, however, a closely fought contest with the Bellbirders sighting 48 species and the Hutt Harriers 47. The day finished with a very pleasant barbecue at Nga Manu. Thank you Peter.

The penultimate meeting of the year included a talk about identifying the differing stages of moult; and the last meeting was dedicated to what to do when confronted with a strange bird.

Our first meeting for the year, in February, brought a nice variety of speakers. Ralph Powlesland instructed us on the features of a fledgling NZ Pigeon (with sample in hand); David Cornick showed us some of his magnificent slides of Black Shag, Spotted Shag, Blue Duck, Wrybill, and Chatham Island Pigeon; Brian Bell, back from a trip to the subantarctic had some shots of nesting colonies of Salvin's Mollymawks on the Bounty Islands; and Peter Reese showed slides of some possible wanderers from Australia, including Australian Little Grebe, Sea Eagle, White-eyed Duck, Dusky Moorhen, and Straw-necked Ibis.

We are looking forward to an interesting and stimulating year with continuation of our regional projects on Kapiti and Mana Islands and at Pauatahanui Inlet, as well as several others.

(Ros Batcheler)

Wairarapa

On 13 December 1992, 28 people from the Wellington and Wairarapa regions met at Onoke Spit to assist Brian Bell to band Blackbacked Gull chicks. This resulted in some 171 chicks being banded, less than the total for 1991 but probably because the season was slightly later this year.

A feature of the day was that nearly half the team were junior members which must augur well for the future of the Society. With so many helpers available, Colin Scadden took the opportunity to band 7 of the larger Caspian Tern chicks at the nearby colony. Not far from the Caspian Terns, the Red-billed Gulls had quite large chicks running about and on the perimeter of this gull colony there were two Black-billed Gull nests with sitting birds; another 5 or 6 Black-billed Gulls were close by.

A good day was had by all, a highlight being meeting people from another region.

(Colin Scadden)

Canterbury

Last year's wretched weather in Canterbury has continued through Christmas and into the New Year. The season loosely called summer has been characterised by 'spring' weather. This is, however, forecast to end on 28 February; then autumn starts. Altogether, it has not been inspiring, but Canterbury members have braved the

elements to see what is about. The summer wader counts produced reasonable numbers of local waders and the usual overseas visitors. Ellesmere has produced its usual crop, and in addition to the residents and regular visitors such as Red-necked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers, there have been up to 10 Glossy Ibis on Colin Hill's paddocks and ponds.

Pied Stilts at least appreciated the wet conditions over the past few months, with a many more pairs found breeding than usual. This resulted in a record number of adults and chicks being caught for colour banding – some 49 at last count.

Indoors, the November meeting was treated to some overseas birds. Dr David Hawke spoke about the coastal birds of southern Florida. The diversity of birds visible (and countable) from his office window was enviable, to say the least, and he also told us of the pressures on water use and wildlife habitat in the very flat areas in and around the Everglades.

Our first meeting for 1993 was at the end of February, but perhaps the social highlight of the summer season was a wine and cheese evening. Canterbury was privileged to host this evening, held in the Zoology Department of the University of Canterbury, on the occasion of the presentation of the 1992 D.L. Serventy Medal of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU) to Dr John Warham (see OSNZ news 63 June 1992).

About 40 Canterbury members, former colleagues, and present staff and students of the Zoology Department were present when the OSNZ's President, Brian Bell, presented John with this most prestigious award on behalf of the RAOU. Brian undertook the happy task as the only New Zealand Fellow of the RAOU, and in presenting the medal to John, he read the medal citation listing John's many achievements in studying, writing about, and photographing seabirds in Australasia, particularly the penguins and petrels.

In accepting the medal, John gave an informative and amusing account of his travels and work in Australia over the last 40 years, and his long association with the late Dr D.L. Serventy, the eminent Australian ornithologist in whose memory the award was established. John paid tribute to the support given him by his wife, Pat, who apparently distinguished herself as an expert killer of troublesome snakes in the outback.

If Canterbury members were not exactly getting their money's worth in birding because of the weather, three trampers claimed to have struck gold. The great moa sighting of 1993 led to headlines around the world, and great media exposure for New Zealand's extinct birds. It is a great pity that the Craigieburns are not thronged with *Pachyornis*, *Euryapteryx*, and *Dinornis*. Perhaps we should read the results of Forest Research's bird counts for

the area more carefully in future; maybe something has been slipping through the net?

(Richard Holdaway)

Southland

It is a while since you have heard from us. First, a bit of good news. Southland now has a Royal Spoonbill colony. A group of birds has set up residence on Omaui Island at the entrance to the Invercargill Estuary. The island is of similar size and vegetation as Maukiekie Island, offshore from Moeraki in Otago. The estuary is an ideal feeding ground for the spoonbills and small groups of them are frequently seen. Ironically, one of the favoured habitats is the rubbish dump where a causeway restricts the tidal flow. Many species of water birds appreciate the sheltered lagoon thus created; 51 species of birds have been

seen in and around this lagoon, with its unsightly overburden of plastic bottles, tyres and the general discards of 50 000 people.

Beach patrolling was carried out last year on a more or less weekly basis by children in the Southland Explorers Club; 400 birds of 24 species were recovered.

Maida Barlow has carried out an intensive study of Caspian Terns, helped by Gary Morgan, Phil Rhodes, Helen Metzger and Roger Sutton. Although only 26 of the usual 70-80 pairs bred in the estuary this season, there were no washouts and 40 chicks survived. One of these had already got as far as the Avon-Heathcote Estuary by 9 February. Maida thinks that the 100 or so birds not seen this year may have bred elsewhere, but despite much searching only two other nests were found.

(Lloyd Esler)

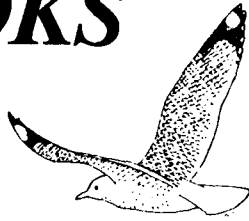

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