

# 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. 67

June, 1993

Note Deadline for the September issue will be  
10th August.

## Royal Spoonbill Banding

Marlborough OSNZ members, with the help of a few outsiders, have just completed the most successful season yet for the banding of Royal Spoonbill chicks at the Wairau Lagoons, Blenheim. We managed to get across to the nesting colony four times over a six-week period and to band a total of 24 chicks.

At the Wairau Lagoons, the Royal Spoonbills breed on the ground and when a nest is approached the chicks remain motionless, so it is rather simple to pick the chicks up and take them a short distance to band before returning them to the nest. On our first visit to the colony this year (20 January) some chicks had already fledged and on our last visit there were still a couple of chicks too small to band, so the birds have an extended breeding period.

This year the Royal Spoonbills nested at just one site, usually they nest at two sites but one of these was flooded out early in the breeding season. At the one site this year there were 28 nests with most nests having three to five eggs. At least 50 chicks would have fledged from these nests.

In the past three seasons, 19 chicks have been banded at the Wairau Lagoons - 1 in November 1990, 11 in February 1991, and just 7 in February 1992. The majority of these birds were banded on Waitangi Day (6 February) which has become our traditional day to band at the lagoons.

Of these 19 birds, 15 have been sighted elsewhere in the country. That's a 75% return which is an incredible result and proves that OSNZ members are active. To date, over 60 sightings of these birds have been sent in from 24 members.

So where have all these spoonbills been seen? Well, to put it simply, everywhere - just look at the map. Some birds have

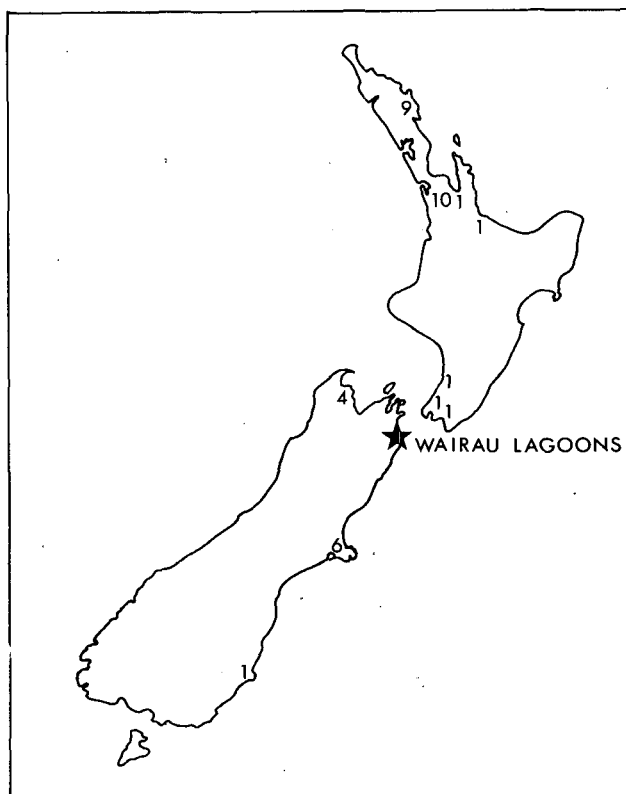
been seen at more than one location. Also, many have been seen a number of times; the record so far is 13 reports for one bird.

The general trend is that most birds drift north in autumn, spend the winter in the Far North and then drift back south in spring.

For example, White/Red - Metal was banded on 6 February 1991; three months later it was at Farewell Spit; exactly a year after banding it was at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary in Christchurch, where it was

recorded four times between 6 February and 13 April 1992; on 20 June 1992 it was at the Rangaunu Harbour in the Far North; in October 1992 it was at the Mangere Sewage Ponds, Auckland, where it stayed for about a month before returning to the Avon-Heathcote Estuary by 4 November 1992, where it remained until at least 6 February 1993.

The above is typical of many birds and it is very pleasing to get so many sightings of one bird. However, there are still



Distribution of sightings of colour banded Royal Spoonbills. The numbers indicate how many birds have been seen in particular areas. Wairau Lagoons is the banding site for all birds.

questions to be answered, such as:

1. How long are individuals staying in a particular area?
2. When do they return to the Wairau Lagoons, if at all?
3. How old are Royal Spoonbills before they breed?
4. Are there specific resting sites on their journey north?
5. Do individuals return to the same wintering site year after year? One bird spent all the winter of 1991 in the Bay of Plenty, but we have no record of where that bird spent last winter.
6. In the long term, just how long do these birds live?

To get the answers to these questions requires your assistance. This is an OSNZ project which relies heavily on members to provide the bulk of the basic information. It is very important that any sighting of a banded bird is officially recorded. The correct way is through the Banding Office, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington. So if you happen to have any old but unreported records, please send them in. Do not worry if you know that others saw the same bird as the time that the bird was in that particular area is valuable information.

By the way, this year we have changed our band combinations to include three colour bands, all above the tarsus; the metal remains on the tarsus. The single colour on the left leg represents the year; the colour for 1993 is white.

BILL CASH

## From the President's desk

We are now well back at work with little hind thought for our summer vacation. Many will recall journeys to exciting bird habitats, but how many will have kept an accurate record of what they saw. Even fewer will have made use of those observations by providing them for inclusion in one or more of the Society's schemes.

Keeping notes of our observations and then passing them on or to a formal data bank for publication is an important discipline for anyone belonging to a scientific society. OSNZ's objective "to study birds" implies that some formal record should be made. Not all members are in a position to conduct a detailed study of species or habitats and many never publish a paper in *Notornis*. However, in *Notornis* there is the opportunity for all to contribute Short Notes about new observations, behaviour, feeding, distribution, and many other aspects of ornithology. The editor is always looking for short articles which can make up a page or less.

Also, there are the Society's schemes which provide valuable repositories for

specialised information such as nest records, moult, and beach patrols.

I would ask all members to consider how they have enjoyed their bird watching and whether they have done more than pass on by word of mouth what they have seen. That strange bird seen at some estuary, an unusual aspect of behaviour not seen before, a group of birds feeding on some quite unexpected food – they are all significant observations that deserve more than a casual comment to a friend. Why not write it down and send it in so that all can share in your observation and enjoyment.

While I encourage all to make the effort to record their observations, I can assure you that this will not decrease the pleasure of bird watching. Indeed, you will get more satisfaction from knowing that you will be adding to the store of knowledge about birds and their habitats. I ask you to give it a try this year to enhance the publication and recording schemes of the Society.

BRIAN D. BELL  
President

## — Wanted —

### Editor for OSNZ news

Because of increased work and family commitments, Paul Sagar has decided to relinquish responsibility for editing *OSNZ news* following production of the December 1993 issue.

Therefore Council seeks a volunteer to be Editor of this well supported and popular OSNZ publication. The task includes editing material submitted for publication, compiling four issues of the newsletter each year, liaising with the Society's printers, and corresponding with members to encourage contributions.

A PC with word processing is available to assist with compiling the newsletter.

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 15 September 1993.

## 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

## — Wanted — volunteers for Chatham Island wader survey

In November 1993 and June 1994 it is planned to conduct wader counts on Chatham Island. This information will be used to fill a gap in our long-term project of National Wader Counts.

Council has made funds available from the Projects Assistance Reserve to subsidise this special Chatham Island project and OSNZ members are invited to volunteer their assistance. It is anticipated that field work will take up to a week during each visit.

Applications should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, OSNZ,  
P.O. Box 12397, Wellington.

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:* Pauline Smith, 15 McLintock Street, Whau Valley, Whangarei. Ph. (09) 437-2974.

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

*South Auckland:* Pam Agnew, 3 Dianne-Louise Drive, Bucklands Beach. Ph. (09) 535-4222.

*Waikato:* David Riddell, Gordonton Road, RD 1, Taupiri. Ph. (07) 824-3877.

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

*Volcanic Plateau:* Keith Owen, 24 Sloane Avenue, Rotorua. Ph. (07) 347-7134.

*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.

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

*Hawkes Bay:* Wayne Twydlle, 124 Nelson Street, Napier. Ph. (06) 835-6563.

*Wairarapa:* Matthew Wong, P.O. Box 90, Greytown.

*Wellington:* Don Stracey, 14 Fitzwilliam Terrace, Tawa. Ph (04) 232-7989.

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

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

*West Coast:* Richard Stocker, Iveagh Bay, RD 1, Kumara. Ph. (03) 738-0535.

*Canterbury:* Andrew Crossland, 46 Frensham Crescent, Christchurch. Ph. (03) 3893964.

*Otago:* Alun Baines, 41 Marton Street, McAndrew Bay, Dunedin. Ph. (03) 476-1022.

*Southland:* Lloyd Esler, 64 Herriot Street, Invercargill. Ph. (03) 217-9060.

## Beach Patrol Scheme 1992 – preliminary report

This report concerns the results for patrols carried out in 1992 from 616 cards received to 14 April 1993. In 1992, 3527 km were travelled. This distance is much less than the average of 4137 km per year travelled during the period 1971-1991. Dead seabirds found in 1992 totaled 5195, which is many fewer than the average of 10 187 found per year for 1971-1991. Of the coastal regions covered in 1992, Southland had the highest rate of recovery at 3.95 birds per km (mainly attributable to Sooty Shearwaters found in May) and East Coast North Island the lowest at 0.5 birds per km.

Unusual finds included a Common Noddy, the first for the Scheme. It was found on an Auckland West beach in June. A Black-bellied Storm Petrel was found on an East Coast North Island beach in October and is the fifth for the Scheme. A Wedge-tailed Shearwater found on an Auckland West beach in October was another unusual find. Sixteen Yellow-eyed Penguins were found mainly in May on Canterbury South beaches. Usually only 5-10 of this species are found each year.

The following are provisional totals for each region of coast patrolled in 1992.

	Birds	km covered
Auckland East	1197	464
Auckland West	1718	1522
Bay of Plenty	400	122
Canterbury North	236	116
Canterbury South	166	78
East Coast NI	72	133
North Coast SI	18	18
Outlying Islands	8	5
Otago	69	100
Southland	585	148
Taranaki	51	56
Wairarapa	12	43
Westland	1	2
Wellington South	96	76
Wellington West	566	279
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5195</b>	<b>3162</b>

The continued success of the Beach Patrol Scheme was due to the people who

organised patrols for groups of members and friends, and to dedicated patrollers who carried out regular patrols. My thanks to Mary Powlesland for preparing further 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 1993

This year, 42 members and friends contributed 577 Nest Record cards covering 54 species, bringing the grand total to 22 470 cards. The number of species covered in the scheme is now 144, with the addition of Cook's Petrel and Mottled Petrel.

18 colonial cards from 7 species are included in the total above: Royal Spoonbill 1, Black Swan 1, Pied Shag 1, Black-backed Gull 3, Red-billed Gull 2, Caspian Tern 9, White-fronted Tern 1.

There was a moderate number of cards submitted and a moderate diversity of species represented. Of note this year was the high number of cards with very detailed information, especially from Erika Woodger, Ralph Powlesland and Bruce Mackereth. The major contributors, in terms of numbers of cards, were: Peter Bull (63), Ross Sinclair (65) and Pete Graham (61) (DoC Northland, watching and protecting Variable Oystercatcher, NZ Dotterel, and Fairy Tern nests under Richard Parrish's direction), Andrew Crossland (53), Jill West (48 seabirds), Don Hadden (37), Ralph Powlesland (29), and Wayne Twydle (25 Black-fronted Dotterel).

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*.

More progress has been made on computerising Nest Record data. Mary Powlesland has written a programme to input Nest Record card data onto the computer, and is now preparing (with generous financial assistance from the Science Committee of the Lottery Grants Board) a package to integrate this with the statistical package (SYSTAT).

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

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS IN 1992/93: David & Michael Bell, Kerry Brown, Peter Bull, John Chapple, Tony Crocker, Andrew Crossland, Tenick Dennison, Bev Elliott, S. Ellison, Phil Garside, Peter Graham, Don Hadden, Hazel Harty, Peter Howden, Peter Langlands, Paddy Latham, Stewart Lauder, Bruce Mackereth, J. Marsh, K. McBreen, David Mudge, Folkert Nieuwland, Sheila Petch, Ralph

Powlesland, Gwenda Pulham, A. Randall, Peter Reese, Hugh Robertson, Paul Sagar, Colin Scadden, Tim Shaw, Rachel Shorten, Ross Sinclair, Bill Sloan, Brent Stephenson, Christine Tisdall, Wayne Twydle, Jill West, Stu Wilson, Erika Woodger.

LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED IN 1992/93: Little Spotted Kiwi 2, Crested Grebe 2, Cook's Petrel 25, Chatham Petrel 7, Mottled Petrel 16, Little Blue Penguin 1, Black Shag 5, Pied Shag 1, White-faced Heron 2, Reef Heron 11, Royal Spoonbill 2, Black Swan 1, Canada Goose 1, Feral Goose 1, Paradise Shelduck 2, Mallard 4, Harrier 1, California Quail 2, Banded Rail 2, Pukeko 11, SI Pied Oystercatcher 7, Variable Oystercatcher 90, Pied Stilt 37, NZ Dotterel 63, Banded Dotterel 11, Black-fronted Dotterel 25, Spur-winged Plover 24, Black-backed Gull 14, Red-billed Gull 2, White-fronted Tern 1, Fairy Tern 5, Caspian Tern 10, NZ Pigeon 8, Feral Pigeon 3, Morepork 3, Little Owl 1, Kingfisher 1, Skylark 3, Welcome Swallow 10, Pipit 1, Dunnock 3, Blackbird 37, Song Thrush 41, Fernbird 1, Fantail 11, Robin 1, Silvereye 10, Chaffinch 2, Greenfinch 20, Goldfinch 12, Redpoll 4, House Sparrow 1, Starling 13, Magpie 3.

HUGH ROBERTSON  
*Convener*

## Report of the Banding Liaison Officer – 1992

During the past year I have received six applications for banding permits from the Banding Office for my comment. This of course is by no means all the applications received by the Banding Office. There is still a trickle of applications from OSNZ members, which is to be encouraged.

There was a slight problem during the year concerning incorrect information being given for colour band combinations. This was satisfactorily attended to by the Banding Officer.

I visited Rod Cossee, the Banding Officer, several times during the year and he certainly has no complaints about OSNZ banding operations.

There was no meeting of the Banding Committee during the year.

JENNY HAWKINS  
*Banding Liaison Officer*

## Annual Report of the Field Investigation Officer 1992-1993

### 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.

We have upgraded the Beach Patrol computer to a much larger and faster model and the *Notornis* editor now has the old computer. Mary Powlesland has been employed to write programmes to allow the input of Nest Record Scheme data, and now, with Lottery Board money, will be writing programmes to analyse the data.

## 2. Review of the Society's special national studies

### Wader census

The biannual national wader census generally continues to operate well. It is pleasing to note that the times that counts are being done has tightened up since discussion at the last RRs meeting. Paul Sagar has published the 1992 winter and summer results in *OSNZ news* 66, and has made a start on analysing the data collected over the first 10 years of the study. New Zealand results are 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 & # of *HANZAB*.

### Cattle Egret

The annual Cattle Egret survey was done in most regions during August 1992; however, a number of regions either did not do their counts or have not reported them to Barrie Heather. For the fifth year in a row the totals were well down on the maximum numbers (1987), but they were similar to totals in the previous four years.

### Banded Dotterel movements

Ray Pierce has now completed a second draft of a paper for *Notornis* on the results of this study. He is waiting for Australian input to complete the picture.

### Black-fronted Dotterel movements

A small number of dedicated people have been catching and colour banding breeding birds, but the birds are fairly elusive. Nevertheless, in 1992/93 another 10-20 birds were banded, mainly in the North Island. We have yet to get any long distance movements (current maximum is 40 km, from Masterton to Lake Wairarapa). Some very good data on mate retention and site fidelity is starting to emerge from the colour banding.

### Pied Stilt movements

This project is going well, with a clearer picture of the movement patterns starting to emerge – southern birds heading for Northland and Auckland harbours, and birds from coastal areas and the North Island tending to be relatively sedentary. Some pairs retained their pair bond through winter, and many birds returned to breed at the same or very close colony; however, many banded birds simply disappeared as the colonies were not always fixed.

Last spring again about 150 birds were banded, with especially good samples from

Canterbury (40), Otago, Hawkes Bay and the Waikato-South Auckland area.

Ray Pierce has decided to continue the project for at least one more breeding season, with special effort needed in the South Island lowlands – North Canterbury and Marlborough in particular. Ray is looking for someone to help with collating the colour-band sightings, which are pouring in at a rate that he is having difficulty keeping up with.

### Passerine movements

The Central Passerine Group ran a series of banding training sessions at Masterton, Wellington and Pukepuke Lagoon during the year. The number of birds banded in 1992/93 was a record with over 4700 birds of 20 species being marked. Almost 70% of these birds were banded by Myk Davis in and around Hawera. The Central Passerine Group has now banded over 14 000 passerines since 1987 and a few medium-distance recoveries have now been reported, most notable of which was a House Sparrow which travelled 90 km from Ward to Picton. Some useful longevity data are now being collected.

### Kereru display dives

The data collection phase of this study ended in June 1990 and these data are awaiting analysis for a paper to be submitted to *Notornis*.

### Royal Spoonbill census

Very good surveys of the country were done in winter 1992 at the time of the winter wader census, and on 6 February 1993; but alas, some regions have been very slow getting their results to Peter Schweigman. Results of the winter census were published in *OSNZ news* 65.

Of the 19 chicks colour banded at Vernon Lagoons, Marlborough, in summers 1989-1992, over half were seen in 1992 from Parengarenga Harbour to Dunedin. A further 24 chicks were colour banded by Bill Cash this season – all with white on the left tibia, and two colours on the right tibia.

Unfortunately, not all sightings of colour banded birds were sent to the Banding Office. Please send ALL sightings of colour banded birds to the Banding Office, even if you know someone else has seen that same bird too. 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 later seen at the Waikanae Estuary.

### Caspian Tern colonies

A nationwide check of Caspian Tern colonies was made in spring-summer 1992. To date, only six or seven regions have reported details of their Caspian Tern colonies and Brian Bell is still waiting for details from the other regions.

## 3. Advice on projects

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

## 4. New studies

No new projects have been proposed.

## 5. Contact with New Zealand organisations

On behalf of OSNZ, I successfully applied to Lottery Science for \$7,000 + GST for the costs of employing a computer programmer to write programmes suitable for statistical analysis of Nest Record Scheme data.

No one responded to the advertisement for an organiser of a new Distribution Mapping Scheme, but I have had preliminary discussions with senior DoC staff who have indicated an interest in jointly repeating the Distribution Mapping Scheme.

## 6. Contact with overseas organisations

I contacted the RSPB in England for a copy of their report on the status of Cirl Buntings in Britain. The report highlights their concerns about the global status of Cirl Buntings, which is apparently in decline in parts of Europe. I distributed several copies of the report to members, and suggest that OSNZ might concentrate more on recording Cirl Bunting distribution and numbers as a prelude to a more detailed study in the near future.

## 7. Applications for funds from the Projects Assistance Reserve

Grants approved in 1992 were:

- \$376 – Ed Minot; Stitchbirds on Kapiti.
- \$1100 – Ian Reid & Waikato members; Grey-faced Petrels.
- \$135 – Ben Bell; Takahē.
- \$210 – Adrian Riegen & Stephen Davies; Kaipara wader roosts.
- \$500 – Hawkes Bay region; canoe.

The \$2,000 for wader counts on the Chatham Islands was not called upon in 1992/93 because work commitments prevented to principal applicants from visiting the Chathams in November 1992. Plans are being made for a visit in November 1993.

HUGH ROBERTSON  
*Field Investigation Officer*

## Report of the OSNZ Library Committee – 1992-93

In 1983 and 1984 Council received proposals from the Library of the Auckland Institute & Museum to integrate the Society's collection of serials and books with the main museum collection and. In return, for the Auckland Museum staff to service all the Society's library requirements. Council originally approved

this integration in 1984, and \$500 was paid towards new shelving.

At their May 1991 meeting Council received a discussion paper from Brian Bell suggesting that a Library Committee be set up under Sandy Bartle's chairmanship, to advise Council on the question of future housing of the library and to draw up policies on:-

- (a) the function and operation of the Society's library;
- (b) to recommend a plan for future housing, cataloging and servicing of the OSNZ library;
- (c) to review exchange policy;
- (d) to decide on new exchanges for *Notornis* recommended in recent years;
- (e) to develop a policy for acceptance of books and serials gifted or bequested;
- (f) to discuss preparation of a list of serials and books held in the OSNZ library for members' use.

Meetings were held at the Auckland Museum on 21 July 1992 and 13 May 1993. Members of the committee are:- Kathy Barrow (Hon. Librarian), Sandy Bartle (convenor), Brian Bell (ex officio), Doug Booth (library volunteer), Brian Gill (Auckland Museum).

At the first meeting three draft policy documents were prepared for Council approval on library policy, plan for future housing, cataloging and servicing, and exchanges and acquisitions.

Proposals for the exchange of 18 additional journals were reviewed and decisions reached.

Before the meeting of 18 July 1992 the Committee inspected the library and reviewed its housing, and afterwards members met with Peter Hughes, Librarian, Auckland Institute & Museum, to discuss the Museum's position concerning future housing and servicing of the OSNZ Library.

Doug Booth was asked to prepare a list of journals and holdings which was duly published in *OSNZ news*.

Lists of new books received will in future also be published in *OSNZ news* from time to time.

At the library meeting on 13 May 1993 progress in establishing new exchanges was reviewed. The following new exchanges have now been established for *Aves* (Belgium), DoC Science & Research publications (NZ), *Dutch Birding* (Holland), and *Seabird* (UK), and others are pending.

Concerns were expressed that a whole generation of book-buying NZ ornithologists were now disposing of their collections, and the OSNZ Library has neither the space nor staff for accommodating more than a few volumes from these gifts, nor cataloguing them for auction or sale to members or otherwise.

The detailed proposals of Mike Graham (RR, Auckland) for the Society to

run regular book auctions to members were considered and rejected because of the labour and time involved, and implications for GST and the Society's tax-exempt status. It was decided instead that books gifted to the Society but not needed for the library should be offered for sale by the Society to a reputable dealer and the funds thus generated used for the purchase of new journals and books or paid into the Projects Assistance Reserve, as directed by Council.

Thanks are due to the Hon. Librarian (Kathy Barrow) and to the library volunteer (Doug Booth) for their work during the year, and to Brian Gill for liaison work and hosting the Library Committee meetings. Our debt to the Auckland Institute & Museum (Librarian Peter Hughes) for housing and helping service our library during the year is gratefully acknowledged.

J. A. BARTLE  
Convenor, Library Committee

### Wanted – information about the foods of parrots & parakeets

Over the past year a group (perhaps 3 or 4) of rosellas has established itself around my home in Mission Bay, Auckland. At present the rosellas are enjoying particularly the golden delicious apples in a neighbour's property.

I would be interested in receiving from other members any records of parrots or parakeets, both native and introduced, utilising non-native plants as food sources. Please send reports to G.L. Don, Bioreserches, P.O. Box 2828, Auckland.

G.L. DON

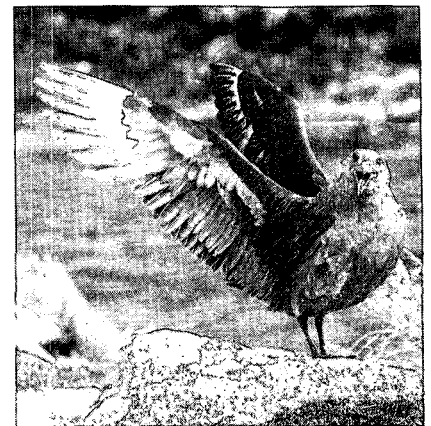
### Mystery Bird # 11

The most conspicuous feature of Mystery Bird # 11 is the large white wingflashes formed by the pale inner half of the primary feathers. This will probably bring to mind two main groups of birds – the skuas and some of the *Pterodroma* petrels. Of the two contenders in the latter group on the New Zealand list – Providence and Kermadec Petrels – the former can be eliminated by virtue of the fact that it has dark upper primary shafts (so no wingflash on the upperwing). Kermadec Petrel has a dark morph which appears similar to the mystery bird, but structurally the petrels are quite different, with long narrow wings. Our bird is also standing upright, a feat petrels cannot manage too well. Close examination of the bill also reveals the nostrils to be holes in the side of the bill, rather than tubes of the true seabirds (Order Procellariiformes, the tubenoses).

So then we are looking at a skua. The skuas are divided into two groups. The first is the group of three smaller skuas of the genus *Stercorarius* - Pomarine, Arctic and

Long-tailed. These three species breed in the northern hemisphere and migrate south after breeding. The second group is the large *Catharacta* skuas, with six different forms (treated variously as three to five species). The genus is primarily a Antarctic and subantarctic group with two species, the Brown Skua (formerly known as the Southern Skua) *C. lombergi* and the South Polar Skua *C. maccormicki* recorded in New Zealand.

So which group are we looking at? The *Stercorarius* skuas are notoriously variable in their plumage, and do have all-dark morphs or phases. The very bulky structure and the broad wings of the bird in the photograph, however, signals that we have a *Catharacta* skua. South Polar Skua has essentially three morphs (dark, intermediate and light), although there is continuous gradation between these. Light morph South Polar can be ruled out by the all-dark plumage of our bird, as they show relatively pale underparts and head. Intermediate morph South Polar Skuas also are lighter than our bird, usually showing a contrast between the all dark underwing and the lighter underparts of the body. Dark morph South Polar Skuas, however, are more difficult to distinguish from the all-dark Brown Skua.



One feature of dark South Polar Skuas is the colour of the nape, which frequently has pale streaking and may cause this area to appear pale from a distance, especially in the breeding season. Two problems exist here: first, we cannot see this part of the mystery bird, and second Brown Skuas can also give the appearance of a paler nape. Therefore now we try another feature. Many South Polar Skuas show a pale area around the base of the lores and forehead, forming a "nose-band" around the base of the bill. This is obviously lacking on our mystery bird and so would point to Brown Skua. However, some dark South Polar Skuas lack this "nose-band" entirely, so this feature does not help us either. South Polar Skuas would be expected to show some contrast between the underparts and the darker upperparts, but of course we cannot see them.

## THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1992

## CONTENTS

Report of the Auditors	Page 1
Treasurers Report	Page 2
Balance Sheet	Page 3
Income and Expenditure Statement	Page 4
Notes to the 1992 Financial Statements	Page 5-6

ANNUAL REPORT OF HONORARY TREASURER TO MEMBERS  
FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 1992

Alterations have been made to the presentation of the Annual Accounts and the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement summarise the overall position and detailed notes highlight both the members and restricted funds account movements.

The Balance Sheet includes the purchase of telescopes, tripods and equipment together with provision made for a Plant Purchase Replacement and Maintenance Reserve to ensure equipment required can be funded in the future.

In respect of the income major grants from the New Zealand Lottery Board have been received and while expenditure in several items has increased Notornis printing costs have decreased. To meet regional needs an increase in the allowance paid together with assistance with petrol vouchers for national counts and regional projects is worthy of note.

Apart from the project assistance fund, which was assisted by a generous grant by BP New Zealand, there is little to note, but the project assistance fund has a large credit balance could assist members more.

The councils work in obtaining grants and in particular Dr Hugh Robertsons assistance with these and in meeting BP is acknowledged with thanks.

M.P. Nee, B. Com, ACA

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

## REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS

The financial statements set out on pages 3 to 6 are in agreement with the accounting records which, in our opinion, have been properly kept. We obtained the information and explanations we required.

We were not appointed auditors of the Society until after the Society's balance date. As a result we were unable to attend the Society's physical count of inventory. Accordingly we were unable to satisfy ourselves of the existence and valuation of the year end inventory.

Subject to the matter described in the preceding paragraph, in our opinion, the financial statements give, under the historical cost convention, a true and fair view of the financial position of the Society at 31 December 1992 and of the results for the year ended on that date.

NAPIER - NEW ZEALAND

27 April 1993

*Coopers Lybrand*  
Chartered Accountants

## The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

Page 3

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1992

		1992	1991
<b>Members Funds</b>			
Members Funds	(Note 2)	<u>81,098</u>	<u>54,505</u>
Total		81,098	54,505
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Accounts Payable	(Note 3)	16,796	16,892
Subscriptions Paid in Advance		19,596	19,827
Goods and Services Tax		-	933
Total		<u>36,392</u>	<u>37,652</u>
<b>Other Liabilities</b>			
Restricted Funds	(Note 4)	97,542	98,742
Total		97,542	98,742
<b>Total Members Funds and Liabilities</b>		<u>215,032</u>	<u>190,899</u>
<b>Library &amp; Assets</b>	(Note 5)		
Library & Assets		32,742	11,243
Total		32,742	11,243
<b>Investments</b>			
Short Term BNZ		27,458	14,709
Total		27,458	14,709
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Bank		1,423	3,111
Accounts Receivable	(Note 6)	6,573	17,049
Society Materials Stock	(Note 7)	47,874	46,045
Goods & Services Tax Due		1,420	-
Total		<u>57,290</u>	<u>66,205</u>
<b>Restricted Assets</b>			
Short Term BNZ	(Notes 4)	97,542	98,742
Total		97,542	98,742
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>215,032</u>	<u>190,899</u>

The attached notes form part of and are to be read in conjunction with this Balance Sheet

M.P. Nee, B. Com, ACA  
Honorary Treasurer

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes on pages 5 and 6 and the audit report on page 2

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1992**

	1992	1991
<b>Income</b>		
Members Funds		
Annual Subscriptions New Zealand	30,932	31,150
Annual Subscriptions Overseas	10,529	9,717
Life Membership Transfer	1,340	1,219
Donations	545	1,231
Profits from Sales (Note 8)	2,404	4,278
Grants (Note 9)	33,214	-
Notornis & News Refunds (Note 10)	6,247	1,080
Interest	3,406	3,373
Total Membership Income	88,617	52,080
Restricted Funds	21,055	28,609
<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>109,672</b>	<b>80,689</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Printing & Distributing Notornis	38,008	36,586
Printing & Distributing OSNZ News	7,263	6,557
Printing & Stationary	2,233	1,338
Printing Annual General Meeting	266	-
General Expenses	796	1,393
Travel Expenses	2,511	2,010
Postage and Tolls	1,507	637
Audit	800	800
Regional Representatives Allowances	1,689	302
Regional Petrol Grant	3,110	-
Insurance	340	-
Publicity	450	-
Library Expenses	307	67
Depreciation (Note 5)	7,141	2,994
Transfer to Plant, Purchase, Rpic & Mice Reserve	7,141	-
Total Membership Expenditure	68,562	52,680
Total Restricted Funds	22,255	16,568
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>90,817</b>	<b>69,248</b>
Excess Income Over Expenditure	18,855	11,441
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,672</b>	<b>80,689</b>
<b>Allocated as follows:</b>		
Life Membership	(603)	(331)
Restricted Funds	(1,200)	-
Accumulated Funds	20,658	11,772
Excess Income over Expenditure	18,855	11,441

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes on pages 5 and 6 and the audit report on page 2

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1992**

**1 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

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

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

(a) **Subscriptions Income**  
Subscriptions in arrears have not been included in income. Subscriptions in advance have been excluded from income.

(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 funds at a rate of 6.25%. This rate is calculated by apportioning the total interest received over restricted and Accumulate funds.

(d) **Depreciation**  
Depreciation is charged at an annual rate of 10% Diminishing Value.

**2 MEMBERS FUNDS**

	Balance 01/01/92	Receipts	Payments	Balance 31/12/92
Accumulated Funds	42,641	88,617	68,562	62,696
Life Membership Fund	11,864	737	1,340	11,261
Available for Specific Purposes				
Plant, Purchase, Rpic and Mice Reserve	-	7,141	-	7,141
	54,505	96,495	69,902	81,098

Accumulated and general funds of society and changes are listed in the Income and Expenditure statement. The life membership fund consists of life membership subscriptions and interest less annual transfer of 10% of balance to Accumulated Funds. The Plant Purchase, Replacement and Maintenance Reserve was set up following consideration by Council of the need for a provision for replacement and maintenance and it was decided in October 1992 to set a fund up on the basis of 10% of the original cost to meet purchase replacement and larger maintenance costs.

**3 ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

	1992	1991
Te Rau Press	-	9,541
Project Assistance Grants Unpaid	10,996	6,551
Pacific Development and Conservation Trust	5,000	-
Audit Fee Accrued	800	800
	16,796	16,892

**4 RESTRICTED FUNDS**

These Funds are held for specific purposes and not available for general purposes of the Society.

Part One	Balance 01/01/92	Receipts	Payments	Balance 31/12/92
Robert Falla Memorial Award	2,674	168	100	2,742
A.T. Edgar Juniors Award	1,736	312	-	2,048
Charles Fleming Memorial	5,233	328	-	5,561
Project Assistance*	86,892	19,831	21,769	84,954
Publications	2,207	416	386	2,237
Total	98,742	21,055	22,255	97,542

\* (See parts 2-4)

**Part Two**

Details	1992	1991
Project Assistance Fund		
Opening Balance	86,892	77,144
Royalties on Field Guide	4,291	8,258
Interest	5,439	5,617
Donations (BP 1500)	1,550	-
Loan Repayment	500	500
Manawatu Forest & Bird Loan Outstanding	1,500	2,000
1991 Projects Reversed	6,551	9,103
	106,723	103,372

Less Grants made (Part 3)	1992	1991
Loan	7,779	6,610
Preliminary Expenses	2,000	2,500
994	994	819
Projects Approved Due (Part 4)	10,996	6,551
End Balance	84,954	86,892
	106,723	103,372

**Part Three**

Project Assistance Grants Made	1992	1991
Ref. 89.03 Nest Card Records	689	-
92.01 Stutchbacks Kapiro	334	-
02 Waikato Gray Faced Petrels	1,050	-
04 Check Waders Kaipara	180	-
05 "Birds of Nelson"	1,500	-
09 Canoe Hawke's Bay	497	-
	4,250	6,610

To Accumulated Funds	1992	1991
92.04 Telescope Boxes	419	-
92.07 Tokens to Regional	3,110	-
	3,529	nil

**Part Four**

Projects Approved and Not Claimed	1992	1991
89.03 Nest Record data to Computer	310	Various
90.01 Passerines Study Manawatu	107	-
05 Equipment Passerines	894	-
06 Shearwaters Junior	2,000	-
07 Bird Slide Collection	550	-
91.03 Wader Census Chatham	2,000	-
92.03 Takaha Study	135	-
06 Distribution Atlas Study	5,000	-
	10,996	6,551

**5 LIBRARY, ASSETS & DEPRECIATION**

Asset	Purchased	Balance 01/01/92	Additions 1992	Depreciation at old rates to 01/01/92	Depreciation at new rates to 01/01/92	Depreciation at new rates 1992	Total Depreciation at new rates	Balance Asset 31/12/92
Library	-	1,000	4,400	-	-	-	-	5,400
Computer	1987	3,763	-	3,384	1,541	222	1,763	2,000
Computer	1990	8,305	1,695	2,489	1,747	825	2,572	7,428
Computer	1992	-	4,000	-	-	400	400	3,600
Display	1989	1,311	-	393	355	96	451	860
Display	1990	1,000	-	300	390	81	271	729
Equipment Scales	1991	2,700	-	270	270	243	513	2,187
Equipment Callipers	1992	-	1,350	-	-	135	135	1,215
Telescopes	1991	-	7,523	-	-	752	752	6,771
Tripods	1991	-	2,426	-	-	243	243	2,183
Boxes	1992	-	410	-	-	41	41	369
		18,079	21,804	6,836	4,103	3,038	7,141	32,742

**6 ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE**

	1992	1991
Advance to IOC	-	10,000
Loan Project Assistance	1,500	2,000
Royalties	1,812	1,778
Advertising	-	660
Sales	144	322
Withholding Tax	-	2,289
Bank Interest	2,697	-
Advances	420	-
	6,573	17,049

**7 STOCKS OF SALE ITEMS**

	1992	1991
Notornis	17,804	18,167
Greeting Cards	4,065	4,354
Index	10,390	10,650
Atlases	1,865	2,233
Checklist	5,986	4,136
T. Shirts	305	396
Car Stickers	1,766	1,766
Flying Starts	4,893	4,343
Posters	800	-
Total Society's Stock	47,874	46,045

**Valuation**

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 Trust present membership requirements will be charged to this stock.

**All Other Items**

These are valued at cost in all cases, greeting cards which continue at revaluation applied in 1989.

	1992	1991
Article	900	-
Lynx	1,037	-
Advertising	437	1,080
Journal Exchanges	3,400	-
	6,774	-
Less Refund to Lynx	527	-
Refunds	6,247	1,080

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes on pages 5 and 6 and the audit report on page 2

## Donations for the Fleming Memorial Issue

In May 1988, Council decided that a special issue of *Notornis* be devoted to papers on the birds of the Chatham Islands as part of a memorial to Sir Charles Fleming. At the May 1993 meeting Council learnt that preparations for the 'supplement' were well underway, with several papers having been submitted.

If the expected number of papers are forthcoming the supplement will be twice the size of an issue of *Notornis*.

The problem is that insufficient funds are available, and therefore donations towards funding of the supplement would be much appreciated. Please send donations to:

Treasurer  
Ornithological Society  
of New Zealand  
P.O. Box 12397  
Wellington

Are we stumped? Were we looking at a colour photograph the colouration would help us. South Polar Skuas have a greyer cast to their plumage, Brown Skua colouration being rather warmer. Perhaps the only pointer we do have is that the underwing and underparts do not seem to show any difference in darkness. In South Polar Skuas there should be some contrast between these areas. This hardly makes for a conclusive identification though. Without the benefit of knowing from the photographer what species it actually is, we can only take the identification to probable Brown Skua.

(Fortuitously, this happens to be the correct answer. I photographed this bird on the Snares Islands while it was completing its territorial long-call. What a test for our series author! Ed.)

The Brown Skua is widespread, occurring in a belt from the Antarctic Peninsula eastwards across the southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans to New Zealand, where it breeds mainly on our southern offshore islands and around Stewart Island. The Brown Skua has also been known as the Southern, Southern Great and Subantarctic Skua.

PHIL BATTLE



### Royal Spoonbill census — 6 February 1993

Two obvious results come out of this census; breeding was earlier than in previous years, and the New Zealand population is still expanding.

Breeding was early, with only nine chicks still in nests compared to 28 at the same time last year. Although as yet I do not know the total number of nests for 1992 and 1993, an early indication suggests that there were more in 1993.

The census this year came up with a total of 426 birds (adults, juveniles and chicks) compared to 361 in 1992. A large number of birds from Maukie Island departed very early. In late January there were still 78 birds on the island, but by 6 February there were only 36. However, this year there were more birds in Canterbury, with 72 at Lake Ellesmere (25 in 1992) and 13 at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary (4 in 1992).

The results were, from south to north, in honour of Southland with their first breeding colony.



### Mystery Bird # 12

Identify this bird. Answer next issue.

	Adults + juveniles	Chicks	Total
Southland	12	1	13
Otago	148	5	153
Canterbury	85	—	85
West Coast	29	—	29
Marlborough	131	3	134
Nelson	2	—	2
Wairarapa	5	—	5
Hawkes Bay	1	—	1
Manawatu	4	—	4
TOTAL	417	9	426

The total of 361 birds on 6 February 1992 compares not too badly with the winter count of 377. I think it was a matter of being too conservative with the numbers of chicks. However, the occasional Royal Spoonbill may still sneak in from Australia.

Let's compare this year's nesting total with another winter census during the June winter wader count. And don't forget to check for banded birds. Please read the article about Royal Spoonbill banding by Bill Cash (see p.1 of this issue) for instructions about what to do with those sightings of colour banded birds.

May I thank all participants for their efforts and hope that your enthusiasm for Royal Spoonbills is maintained.

PETER SCHWEIGMAN

### An aerial survey of waders using Kaipara Harbour

Famous for its size (about 94 700 ha and a shoreline of about 612 km), the Kaipara Harbour is an area offering mudflats, mangroves, shelly beaches, as well as open

waters, to birds. During both the summer and winter the harbour is used for feeding and roosting by thousands of Arctic and NZ migrant waders.

Censuses, co-ordinated between the Northland and Auckland regions of OSNZ, are conducted biannually. So wide is the range of habitats and so huge the area to be covered, there always has been the worry that important sites are overlooked. The fact that although Kaipara is by far the largest harbour in the area it often records lower counts than either the Manukau or Firth of Thames does not help either.

The aim therefore was to survey the entire harbour on one high tide, looking at known roosting sites and for new ones. The only way to cover such a huge area is by light plane, so we spent 3 hours on the morning of 23 November 1992, circumnavigating the harbour in a single engine Auster of considerable vintage with an even older engine. This flight was made possible by a grant from the OSNZ's Project Assistance Reserve and a very cooperative, keen-eyed pilot.

The plane was well suited to the task, being capable of flying at speeds as low as 45 knots. Much of the flight was spent at between 70 and 100 m a.s.l. and at between 50 and 100 knots. At these heights all roosting birds were disturbed from their rest by our passage, so we frequently had views of flocks whirling below our wing tips. Those sights, the novel perspective, and the experience of flying in a small plane vulnerable to the gusty wind made for an exciting journey. There was little chance of missing any flocks and flying at around 60 knots we were able to identify the different waders reasonably and to get fairly accurate counts.



Well documented locations for waders, such as Jordan's Farm on the south-east and Tapura Bank and Journey's End on the eastern side produced the largest concentrations, with waders numbering in the thousands. Hundreds of birds were also present at Papakanui Spit (South Head), Hokorako Creek (to the north-east), Rat Island (between Shell Beach and Jordan's Farm), and Okaro Creek (the eastern side of North Head). Rat Island is known for its colony of Caspian Terns, and this could be seen from the air, but the number of waders present - 500+ Pied Oystercatchers - was surprising. On 30 March 1976 a Lesser Knot banded at Perth, West Australia, was recovered at Okaro Creek, so we suspected that migrant waders would be present there. In fact, some 500+, mainly godwits and knots, were noted at this very isolated and seldom visited roost. Groups of 20-30 birds, usually Pied Stilts or Pied Oystercatchers, were scattered on river banks and small shelly beaches, mainly on the eastern side of the harbour.

Only one site that has been known to hold large numbers of waders (5000+) sometimes, Te Karaka Creek (near Glorit on the southeast), was unoccupied. However, more than 100 Black Swans and 50 Paradise Shelducks west of the mangroves there were noteworthy. Also of interest was the previously unrecorded shag colony at Awakohukohu Creek (to the south-west).

We were able to pinpoint on 1:50 00 topographical maps of the harbour all likely sites however small or isolated which we will endeavor to get to on census days. This should ensure that in future counts are much closer to the actual numbers of birds present.

It is known that many more sites come into use during the winter, particularly waterlogged paddocks, with the arrival of large numbers of Pied Stilts and Pied Oystercatchers. We hope that it might be possible to repeat the survey at that time of year.

STEPHEN DAVIES  
& ADRIAN RIEGEN

## Passerine wintering in the Manawatu

This passerine banding study started during the 1990 winter and continued in 1991 and 1992.

The scope of the project is to band passerines wintering in the Manawatu, with emphasis on birds in native vegetation fragments, taking morphological measurements and fat condition evaluation.

The native forest fragments do not seem to support a large number of birds in the Manawatu; several banding sessions resulted in very few captures, and these were Fantails, Silvereyes and Blackbirds. Two other locations were tried, the

Horticultural Research Centre orchards and Flock House parks. Especially fruitful were the banding sessions at Levin and an abandoned kiwifruit orchard became a standard mist-netting site.

Over the three seasons, 1025 birds of 12 species were caught (including recaptures); the large majority of them were Silvereyes. On more than 90% of these birds wing measurements, fat reserve estimation, and body mass data were taken.

The most remarkable finding is the wintering site fidelity, demonstrated by Silvereyes, Chaffinches and Blackbirds, both within and between years. This phenomenon is known from Europe and North America, but is not well documented in New Zealand. Silvereyes are the most significant in this respect as they do not breed in the study orchard yet return to it every winter in large numbers. The average time between the first and last capture in wintering Silvereyes was 13 days; the longest record was 41 days.

Applying a population size estimate allowing for residents as well as "floaters", it was estimated that at the Levin study area, the resident Silvereye population is about 83 birds, while more than 270 were banded in one winter.

The study has now entered its 4th winter. Several papers are in preparation on the population size estimation, the fat reserve and body mass variation, as well as on the morphology of the species concerned.

I am grateful for the support OSNZ has given me to start this study.

GABOR LOVEI

## Where have our Kingfishers gone?

During the first week of April 1993, seven Wairarapa OSNZ members journeyed from Masterton to Waikaremoana to Opotiki to Coromandel to Miranda and then back to Masterton via the Volcanic Plateau. During this trip they saw only 11 Kingfishers.

Do other members have any information about trends in Kingfisher populations around the country?

HELEN COOK

## Mystery Bird Quiz



D



E



F

Thank you to those who entered the first Mystery Bird Quiz. And thank you to those who in addition to your guesses wrote indicating that you thought this quiz was a good idea that added extra interest to *OSNZ news*. Someone also asked if the birds were all in New Zealand. Yes, they will all be from the New Zealand list.

There was just a small response which may have meant the pictures I chose were too difficult. On the other hand more of you may have entered if you had known the prize that was available - one year's free subscription to *OSNZ*.

This is definitely something worth trying for, so it has been decided to allow those of you who didn't enter the first quiz to do so along with this second quiz. So at this stage all I can give you is a progress report. Nobody has all three correct and just one has two correct. Good luck this time.

By the way, sorry about bird C being printed upside down in the last issue - a printer's error!

DON HADDEN

## Recent Reports

This report covers the months of February to mid May and is compiled from records from Auckland, South Auckland, Waikato, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, West Coast and Otago. Note that these records have yet to be confirmed by the Rare Birds Committee.

Please send any records for the September *OSNZ news* to Derek Onley, c/o Post Office, Karitane, Otago. The deadline for the next issue is 14 August.

### Seabirds

The usual winter flock of c200 Little Black Shags returned to Hobson Bay (Auckland) by early May. In Hawkes Bay some of about 40 nests at Lake Hurimoana were still occupied in April and a further 103 birds were roosting. Way south of their usual range the single bird at Greymouth was still present in May.

16 Little Terns at Kidd's, Karaka (S. Auckland) were seen on 26 Feb., a usual date but 8 at Kaipara Harbour (Auckland) on 25 Apr. were quite late. Also rather late in the season were 10 juvenile Gannets off Green Island (Otago) on 12 May and 2 Arctic Skuas at Moeraki (Otago) on 16 Apr. A huge number of White-fronted Terns, possibly as many as 20 000, were roosting at Aramoana Mole (Otago) on 17 Apr., so perhaps the skuas were not that late! Aramoana also had a large number of Black-fronted Terns, 240+ on 19 Apr. Movement northwards was indicated by records from Manawatu in late Feb. and Waikanae (Wellington) on 2 Apr., and the first birds (8 adults) arrived at Napier (Hawkes Bay) on 22 Apr.

15+ Fairy Terns at Kaipara Harbour on 25 Apr. included some colour banded chicks from the breeding colonies at Mangawhai and Waipu. A White-winged Black Tern was at the Waikanae Est. on 17 Apr. and the Hawkes Bay Gull-billed Tern came back to the Ahuriri Estuary yet again.

### Herons etc

Most of the Otago Royal Spoonbills had left by the end of Apr. but there were still 5 at Hawkesbury Lagoon on 9 May, almost a month later than last year. Birds arrived in the North Island from Apr. onwards. 16 at the Manawatu Est. on 2 Apr. included 5 colour banded birds from the Wairau Lagoons in Marlborough. Hawkes Bay birds arrived at the Ahuriri Est. on 22 Apr. and there were 32 by 29 Apr. 10 reached Kawhia (Waikato) by 15 Apr. and the highest numbers yet (14) were recorded on 26 Apr. At Mangere, the usual Auckland wintering site, 2 returned by 4 Apr. and 13 were there by 4 May.

The first reports of Cattle Egrets came from opposite ends of the country on 9 Apr. - 2 were at Henley (Otago) and 5 at Mercer (S. Auckland). In the Auckland

and Waikato area they were present at the usual sites - Aka Aka, Piako, and Rangiriri - by mid Apr., with a maximum of 50% at Rangiriri on 19 Apr. On the West Coast, small numbers were seen at Arahura and Mananui by late Apr. and there were 20 at Westport by 3 May.

15 Bitterns at L. Waahi (Waikato) on 24 Apr. was the highest number so far recorded and 10 were present in a small area of the Whangamarino Swamp (Waikato) on 9 Apr. Birds were also reported from Mangatawhiri Swamp (S. Auckland), Pukepuke Lagoon (Manawatu), the Arahura Valley and Greymouth (West Coast). Also in Greymouth, a Little Egret was present on 4 May and the bird in Hawkes Bay was still at Clive during the autumn. Other records came from the upper Manukau Harbour and Lake Whangape (S. Auckland) in late Apr. The Little Egret at L. Whangape provided convenient comparison with an Intermediate Egret on 22-24 Apr.. Only one Glossy Ibis was reported, from Westport on 5 May and a Reef Heron was seen in Otago at Karitane on 28 Feb.

### Waterfowl

Wintering Dabchicks had arrived at the Ahuriri Est. by 15 Apr. Elsewhere in Hawkes Bay an increase over last year was noted at L. Hurimoana. At Wattle Down Ponds, a new breeding site in S. Auckland, 2 adults and a juvenile were still present on 21 Mar., but only one bird was found at Mangatawhiri Swamp on 3 May. Coots now appear to be scarce on Hamilton Lake (Waikato) - 1 on 10 Apr. was exceptional but at L. Hatuma (Hawkes Bay) 41 on 10 Apr. was the first record for that site. Scaup also seem to be increasing in Hawkes Bay. L. Hurimoana was colonised recently and 26+ birds were there in Apr. A further indication that Scaup disperse widely came from Hawkesbury Lagoon (Otago), 3 males and an immature on 26 Feb. were the first recorded there.

785 Canada Geese at L. Waahi on 24 Apr. suggest a continued increase in the north, but numbers on the West Coast have remained very low for over 10 years and 2 at Hokitika Oxidation Ponds on 26 Apr. were worth noting. A surprise at Fernhill (Hawkes Bay) was an immature Mute Swan on 27 Apr.

### Waders

Wrybill numbers around Auckland were much the same as usual with 600 at Mangere on 24 Apr. and c1500 at Miranda on 14 Feb. 600 were counted on 5 Mar. at Pakuranga Creek, a newly discovered roost site on the Firth of Thames. The odd Black-fronted Dotterel strayed north to Mangere on 9 Apr., L. Waahi on 24 Apr. and another reached L. Hinemaiaia (Volcanic Plateau) on 29-30 Apr.

The main godwit and Knot flocks left

the Auckland Harbours around 20 Mar., but the smaller waders stayed later and there were still 50 Curlew Sandpipers at Karaka and 550 Turnstones at Tapora on 27 Mar.

Some of the rarer waders stayed long enough to assume breeding plumage - a Mongolian Dotterel at Karaka on 12 Apr., a Greenshank in Hawkes Bay on 10 Apr. (possibly the same bird as in spring?), 1 of the 2 Siberian Tattlers at Aramoana (Otago) on 19 Apr. and a Black-tailed Godwit at Miranda on 9 Apr. Also of note was a Greenshank at Miranda on 7 Feb. (surprisingly the first record from there), 3 Marsh Sandpipers at Mangere on 24 Apr., Pectoral Sandpipers at Mangere, L. Whangape and the Manawatu Est. in Mar. and Apr., 4 Terek Sandpipers at Pakuranga Creek on 5 Mar. and 1 still at Kidd's, Karaka on 12 Apr., an American Whimbrel at Ahuriri on 13 Feb., and an Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit at Mangere on 16 Mar. The Broad-billed Sandpiper at the Manawatu Estuary was still there on 13 Mar., but the bird at Kidd's, Karaka, was last seen on 20 Mar.

### and the rest

If confirmed, a Kiwi heard at Mt Pirongia (Waikato) will be the first record for decades. None was found in an extensive survey last year. At least one Nankeen Kestrel is still hanging around Te Mata Peak (Hawkes Bay). 6 Sulphur Crested Cockatoos were seen at Piopio (Waikato) in Mar., well south of their usual range and another at Manurewa (S. Auckland) on 7 Feb. was also a bit out of place. The odd combination of Galahs and Spotless Crakes continues to do well on Ponui I. (Auckland) - 18 Galahs were present on 23 Apr. and crakes were reported in "good numbers".

Migrating Long-tailed Cuckoos were heard at Mt Victoria (Wellington) on 1 Feb., Hamilton on 22 Feb. and 17 Mar., and Oratia (W. Auckland) between 23 Feb. and 1 Mar. Several Bellbirds, a rare species in the north-west, were reported from the Hunua Ranges on 3 Apr. Cirl Buntings still survive in North Otago at Kakanui and Moeraki, but records from other parts of the province were few and far between this year. The Tawa Myna still survives and possibly took a trip to Pukerua Bay (Wellington), and the Auckland City Rook took up with a Magpie at Green Bay on 13 Apr.

Compiled by DEREK ONLEY

## Regional Roundup

### Northland

The most interesting and exciting development in our region was the discovery of 2-3 pairs of Rifleman by Ray Pierce and a DoC survey party in the difficult terrain of the remote Warawara

Forest, North Hokianga. The Rifleman is considered to have lived in Northland last century, but to have disappeared from the region. Before this latest sighting, the northern limit of the species was thought to be the Kaimai Ranges, about 300 km to the south of Warawara.

East and west coast beach patrols have continued as usual with the only significant find being 3-4 Arctic Skuas - awaiting confirmation.

Counts of NZ Dotterels were carried out on 27/28 February, 27/28 March and 24/25 April by Richard Parrish and his team. The results are still being analysed. Consistent numbers of birds were found in smaller estuaries but more movement occurred in larger areas where the birds had more choices.

The Whangarei Harbour survey was carried out on 27 February in beautiful weather. The highest number of Royal Spoonbills seen to date is 17, including 4 banded birds. There were also 49 Royal Spoonbills (2 banded) seen at Unahi, and Richard Parrish counted a further 25 at Parengarenga Harbour.

We also had pleasant weather for the survey of the lakes at Pouto on 20 February. Good numbers of Dabchicks were counted - over 100. The first sighting of Cattle Egrets for this year was also at Pouto, with 30 egrets there on 11 April.

We were fortunate to have Graeme Wragg return to show us slides of his trip through the Middle East to Africa at our April meeting.

During Easter, 10 fortunate members went over to Little Barrier Island for 3 days and 2 nights and enjoyed a close look at the birdlife on this unique island.

Our annual survey of Motukawanui Island in the Cavalli Group was carried out on 24 April. It is becoming very overgrown in places which makes travel difficult, but bird numbers are fairly stable. No Indian Mynas were seen this year and finch numbers were down. Two Reef Herons and 2 Moreporks were unusual sightings. We hope to be involved in the future development of the island, helping DoC to plant areas and to remove the few exotic pines etc before they become too numerous.

Finally, a tale of 2 members who shall remain nameless, who crept stealthily up to an owl in a garden, sneaked away and got a camera, held whispered discussions about feather fluffing and eye movements only to find when they got really close that it was a ceramic garden ornament - *Ninox novaeseelandiae ceramica* perhaps?

(Lorna Simpkin)

### Auckland

The evening meetings in Auckland are held at the Museum, where the good facilities continue to attract a reasonable attendance, including a welcome number of overseas

visitors. Being the principle point of arrival for most overseas visitors we are working on a number of ways to encourage bird enthusiasts to make contact.

At the meetings members continue to support the stamp collection run by Betty Binning, and most evenings see a huddle of members around the album trying to identify some obscure species from Bratislavia, or other equally little known countries. Michael Taylor runs the "blue book" and is now well versed in extracting interesting records from our seemingly secret notebooks.

On the subject of note takers. Gillian Eller managed to get Dick Sibson out to look at birds on the Manukau recently. Dick is well and working on a study of Pipits, so any reader with interesting records of Pipits please feed them into the system.

We have had two particularly good guest speakers this year. Firstly, Tony Mansfield spoke about the birds of Central Africa.

Tony had an extended business experience in countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Zaire, Tanzania, and Kenya, and in the process became an undoubted authority on the birds of that region. His superb slides presented with many of the bird calls and often human anecdotes made an excellent evening.

The second guest speaker was Alison Henry of DoC, who gave a presentation on the pest eradication programme on Rangitoto and Motutapu Islands, and DoC plans to revegetate Motutapu. Having done our 15th survey of Tiritiri Matangi in March, the plans are of much interest to us and a similar survey regime to the popular Tiritiri visits is planned for the much closer islands.

The Tiritiri surveys on the surface, are producing interesting results as Saddlebacks and Whiteheads increase in tandem with the revegetation. To take the guesswork out of such assumptions, Dick Veitch has kindly offered to put our accumulated raw data onto his computer later this year, and we will report on the results in a future issue.

This welcome liaison with DoC follows the initiative led by Brenda Green to bring us closer to the Regional Parks Department of the Auckland Regional Council (ARC). Reports from Wenderholm Reserve, where possum poisoning has taken place, show good success with nesting NZ Pigeons. Kokako surveys have taken place in the Hunua Ranges, but most attention has been on Ambury Farm Park next to the sewage works. 20 members and friends visited a new hide built by the ARC at Ambury, and were rewarded with some good waders including 4 Marsh Sandpipers, 1 Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit, Sharp-tailed and Pectoral Sandpipers, and many Wrybills.

Ray Clough and others have been keeping a close watch on the waders this year around the sewage works and Mangere, and have kept filing in reports on the Royal Spoonbills, stilts, and a Broad-billed Sandpiper which stayed with us for some time. The reports from Ambury, along with details of the new hide, have been taken by Sarah Lowe to our counterparts in sister city Fukuoku, Japan. We hope they can emulate the ARC example at the opposite end of our waders' migration route.

Other activities include good work by Gwenda Pulham studying Fairy and Caspian Terns, and NZ Dotterels with Simon Chamberlin and others. Ken Bond now organises the beach patrols which started to get more interesting again in April with the collection of White-chinned and Westland Petrels and a Black-browed Mollymawk.

(Mike Graham)

### South Auckland

In February, a small group of members stayed at Peter & Pat Chamberlin's farm on Ponui Island. With Pat as guide we saw 7 Galahs - in early May the Chamberlins counted up to 30 again. No Galahs were reported from the Mangatawhiri area during late spring and summer. Not far from the Chamberlin's homestead Spotless Crake answered the tape and kiwis were out feeding. We hope to visit the island again at Queen's Birthday Weekend to help check the kiwi population, but from all accounts they seem to be doing well.

Although we have not had any organised field trips, a lot of work has been going on e.g. checking for colour bands, beach patrols, helping with cannon netting, and keeping an eye on waders and the returning flocks of Cattle Egrets.

At our March meeting, Pam Agnew treated us to some beautiful slides from the 11 months she and Des spent in Australia last year. In April, Anthea Goodwin and Norah and Robert Peachman recalled some of their experiences during recent, and separate, holidays in Tasmania.

(Anthea Goodwin)

### Waikato

Our summer bird sightings came from home and abroad.

Long-tailed Cuckoos were seen in Hamilton gardens; Kaka and Bellbird were reported from Whirinaki and Kokako at Mapara; Robins were seen and heard in full song at New Year in the upper Whakatane River catchment. Banded Rails were seen at Opoutere. Several members saw Saddlebacks and Red-crowned Parakeets on a day trip to Stanley Island. Yellowhead, Brown Creeper, Robins and Yellow-eyed Penguins were observed during a South Island tour, while one adventurous sailor survived seasickness to enjoy sightings of Southern Ocean birds.

Recent surveys of Hamilton Lake show Coot numbers at zero with the lake water in very dirty condition. On a pre-duck shooting survey of Lake Waahi a surprise sighting was that of a Banded Dotterel feeding on a narrow sandy beach backed by willows. This lake is a great place to see Bittern at close range, with 15 being noted on the day. Canada Geese have increased in number to the displeasure of the local farmers. A post-shooting survey would be an interesting comparison. After being alerted by South Auckland members to the presence on L. Whangape of a Little Egret, an Intermediate Egret, 3 Royal Spoonbills and 2 Pectoral Sandpipers several Waikato members were lucky to see all but the spoonbills before 1 May! The Kawhia Harbour flock of Royal Spoonbills created excitement when the 10 birds reported by the local farmer increased to 14 two days later. The 14 being seen on the same day as the 3 at L. Whangape.

Cattle Egrets began arriving in the region around Easter with numbers increasing over the following weeks. No wing tagged birds have been seen so far.

Folkert and Shirley Nieuwland spoke at our March meeting of their experiences on Red Mercury Island, where Folkert monitored the health of the Little Spotted Kiwis during the eradication of the island's kiore. After our local AGM in April, Hugh Clifford gave a fascinating account of his tour of the Southern Oceans which included close encounters with Hooker's Sealions, nesting albatross, and inquisitive shags that ignored the "keep 5 m distance" rule to nibble the book of the visitors trying to photograph them.

With the aid of our OSNZ telescope, Bryan and I set out recently to search for colour banded NZ Dotterel and were surprised to find that as well, we recorded banded Caspian Terns, Pied Stilts, SIPO, Wrybill, a Curlew Sandpiper, and a Reef Heron! It really does pay to look closely at all the legs every time doesn't it?

(Bev. Woolley)

#### Hawkes Bay

In February we visited Lake Hurimoana. There were plenty of waterfowl on the lake, including a large number of paradise Shelducks, Black Swans, Shovelers, Grey Teal, and Mallards. Some 23 Dabchicks and 3 Scaup were also present. There was a nesting colony on the islands in the lake, made up largely of Little Black Shags but with a few Black Shags as well. About 50 nests (both new and old) could be seen. Other birds seen included Pied Stilts and Pukekos.

In March we had a trip to the Ahuriri Estuary. From the Embankment Bridge we could see 34 Golden Plovers, c250 Bar-tailed Godwits, 1 Gull-billed Tern, 30 Banded Dotterels, 6 Caspian Terns, plus Little Shags, White-faced Herons and Pied Stilts. At the Southern Marsh there were 4 Red-necked Stints. Some of the Golden Plovers were showing breeding plumage.

On 17 April we checked 3 lakes for Dabchicks. At Easter last year we carried out a full survey to count Dabchicks and this year we checked Lakes Oingo, Hurimoana and Roto-o-kiwa as a comparison. The numbers of Dabchicks counted this year (with 1992 figures in brackets) were L. Oingo 27 (21), L. Hurimoana 33 (7), and L. Roto-o-kiwa 22 (11).

(Christine McRae)

#### Manawatu

Almost 6 months have gone by since the Manawatu branch reported in.

We have had a fairly good summer, with a wide variety of species and good numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots. Much to our amazement the Broad-billed Sandpiper returned and spent the entire summer with us - almost certainly the same bird as last year. It was last seen doing circles of the high tide roost in company with 4 Golden Plovers, on 4 April.

There have been the usual small numbers of waders other than godwits and knots. These included one each of Siberian Tattler, Curlew Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper, and Turnstone, 4 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, and 30 Golden Plovers. An Asiatic Whimbrel was seen in late September but did not stay, and Jim Moore saw a Far Eastern Curlew on several occasions.

The arrival and departure of the Arctic waders were monitored again, on a weekly basis. The results were very similar to the previous year. The buildup of godwit numbers started before that of the knots, and the knots started to depart before the godwits. Most of the sandpiper species arrived and departed later than the larger waders.

Walter Cheeley continues to educate schools, CWA, bowling clubs, professional retired business persons, in fact anyone who ventures into the Foxton Beach enclave. Well done Walter and I know he is making good use of the OSNZ side collection to pass on information to the general public.

Cattle Egrets appear to be later than usual appearing in our region this year. Malcolm Olsen and Walter Jackson had seen 5 near Levin in mid April. Pam & Roger Slack saw 2 at Whitakino on 19 April, but none the following week.

Royal Spoonbills have been fairly difficult to find at the Manawatu Estuary of late, but at high tide on 1 May we saw 46 on a sand bar in the river. They had probably come down river, away from the guns and were very restless. No banded birds have been noted so far.

We have had two evening meetings since January and both were very well attended. Susan Cork, a Ph.D student in

the Vet. Science Department at Massey University, gave a talk in March about her trip back to NZ via Africa, where she went on a 6-month safari. She also talked about her experiences banding birds to study "Yetsinia" in wild bird populations. Our second meeting was on 24 April. This was a pot luck dinner to farewell Sybil Creswell on her trip to the UK, to see her family after 18 years, and also to welcome Christine Reed who is back at Massey for 5 months. Christine gave us an update on the work she is involved with in Twizel on the endangered Black Stilt.

In co-operation with DoC, we have produced 2 informative display boards for use at the manawatu Estuary. The boards are being paid for by the Horowhenua District Council and are being built by the Heritage Trail Trust. One board will be erected near the sandspit wader roost, and the other near the motel at the end of Dawick Street. It is hoped that the boards will provide information about the internal migrants, resident birds, and Arctic migrants to the general public. The numbers of trail bikes being ridden along the sandspit is quite a worry, and the local council is also going to ask these people not to disturb the birds.

(Pam Slack)

#### Marlborough

January saw the Fluttering Shearwater transfer from Long Island, with 100 chicks near fledging successfully transferred to Maud Island. In early February helpers were at Motuara Island - this island is now free of kiore - traps were removed and nesting and roosting boxes were placed in trees. It is hoped to transfer South island Saddlebacks here from Stewart island next summer.

(Bev. North)

#### Otago

At the April indoor meeting, Malcolm Foord gave a large audience a very interesting talk about the Yellowheads of Beaumont Forest, South Otago. The beech forest holds a good populations of Yellowhead and Brown Creeper, but the adjacent exotic forest holds only Brown Creeper, and no Yellowheads. The good news was that the Yellowheads are holding their own and are not declining in numbers.

The bush bird survey of the exotic and native forests in the outskirts of Dunedin is to continue for another year.

The Cirl Bunting survey during the breeding season was not very successful. Known small breeding colonies did not show any signs of the species. It is assumed that the breeding season was just too cold and wet for Cirl Buntings. It is hoped to do a winter survey, checking flocks of finches and Yellowhammers for these elusive Cirl Buntings.

(Peter Schweigman)

**DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE IS 10 AUGUST**