

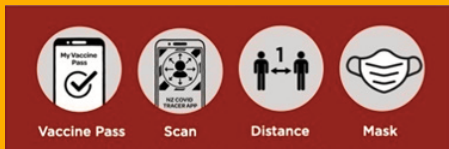


Birds New Zealand  
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## *Otago Region Newsletter 2/2022* *March 2022*



Meetings at new  
venue ~ 4th  
Tuesday of  
month

Unite  
against  
COVID-19

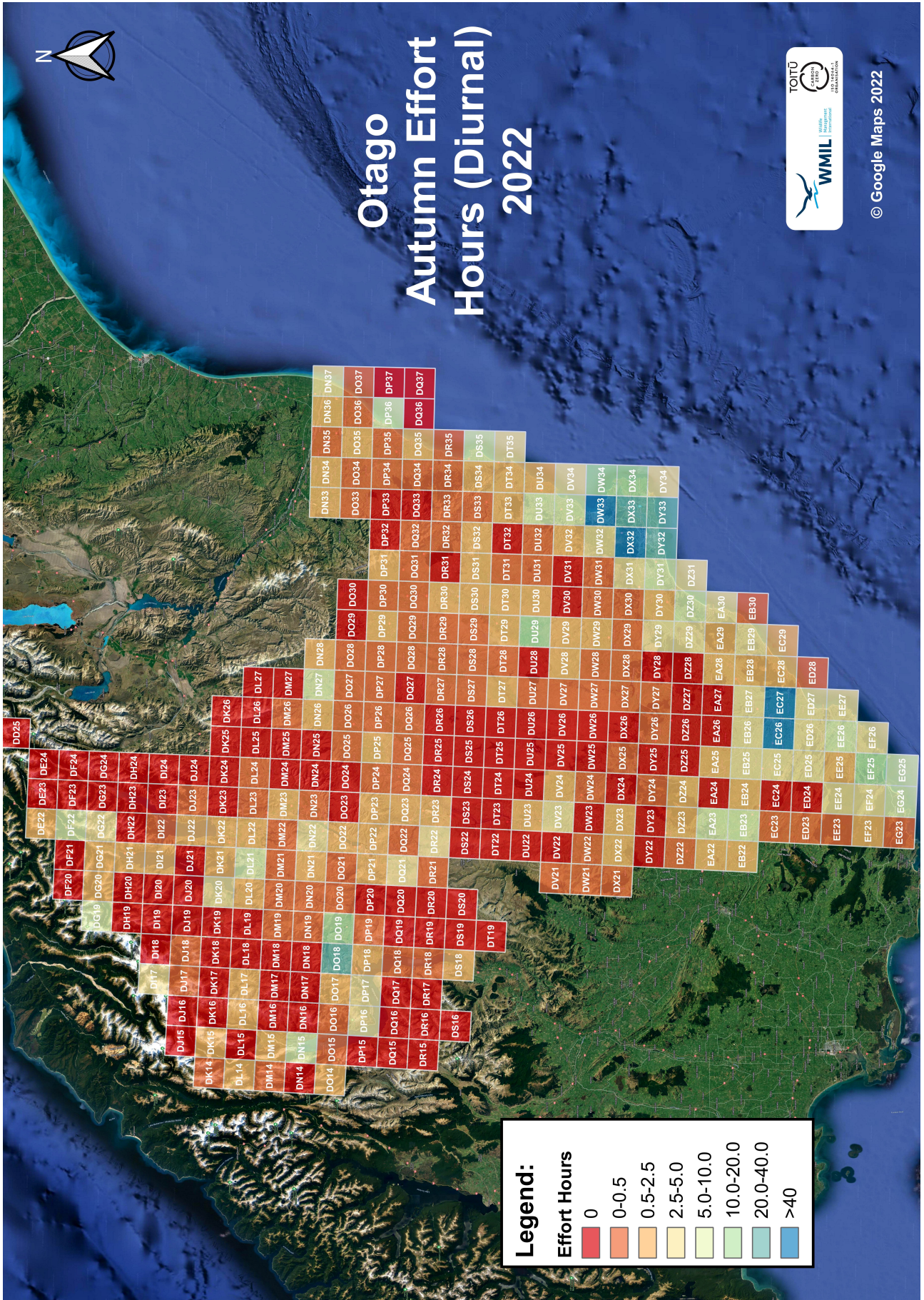
### **Ornithological Snippets**

Large numbers of **Australasian Shoveler** were counted at Queenstown Wastewater Treatment Plant in late February, with at least 1150 on 20 Feb, along with 440 **Paradise Shelduck**. In late February, “a lot of small birds” were reported on the mudflats at Upper Manorburn Dam, thought to be **NZ Dotterel**, but a photo suggests they were **Banded Dotterel**. A single bird of the latter species was seen at Sutton Salt Lake on 20 February. A **Ruddy Turnstone** was seen from the Aramoana saltmarsh walk on 13 March. A flock of **Spur-winged Plover** numbered 185 near Teviot in the Clutha Valley on 28 February, and a **White Heron** was at Katiki Pond on 4 March.

Having been prompted by the note in the February issue of the Birds NZ newsletter. Beth Wishart reports getting three **Eastern Rosella** in her backyard in Helensburgh. They fly off towards Flagstaff or Ross Creek after they're done in the yard.

Please send any interesting reports to [cluthaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com) **Richard Schofield**







We have now completed the third summer season of the Atlas, with seasonal coverage in 282 squares out of 348 (up from 206 this time last year), with more checklists in year three than in the previous two summers combined, and the number of species recorded up to 130. Now we just need to carry that enthusiasm through to autumn, which bore the brunt of lockdown in the first year and so has plenty of opportunity for useful coverage. A new map from the national Atlas team shows the autumn effort hours broken down into finer intervals than the existing map, and as such shows better which squares have only a small amount of coverage – ie most of them!

I still intend to organise field trips when possible, but if anyone is heading away from well-covered areas, and would like some pointers as to where to go, please consult the maps, or let me know and I'll let you know where the gaps are.

After the March field trip was cancelled due to a poor weather forecast (strong winds in exposed places are not ideal for finding all birds), I'd like to reschedule the Catlins trip for **Saturday 2 April**. Please let me know if you are interested in taking part, so that I can keep you up to date with any developments.

Also upcoming is eBird's Big Day, on **Saturday 14 May**. Hopefully we can contribute our share of records to the overall total, as well as maybe getting our own local specialities.

Contact Richard 027 281 8701 or [cluthaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com)

## BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

### Reminder ~ Meetings and Field Trips under Covid restrictions

Welcome to the new birding year. Check out our exciting programme of speakers and events at the back of the newsletter. We are trying not to restrict our activities too much under the Red Traffic Light covid setting and plan to have Indoor Meetings and run field trips with as much care as possible being taken to manage the risks associated with Covid-19; we will be adhering to Government regulations and guidelines regarding meetings, etc.

#### Meetings at new venue on 4th Tuesday of month.

We are trying a new venue for at least the first half of 2022. It is the **Community Room in NEV (Valley Project)** beside NEV Primary School. This should give us a bit more flexibility and is more informal than the university venue. The big change is that the meetings will be on the 4th TUESDAY of the month. I hope this doesn't clash too badly with your schedules. So please update your diaries. The venue has plenty of parking, easy access and is on regular Bus Route No. 8 to Normanby (from Bus hub at 6.59 or 7.14pm would work OK and 9.30pm back). The Valley Project is just after and beside the NEV Primary School (on right going up NEV) and you will see a mural of NZ Falcon on the carpark wall - very welcoming!

At this stage we want to continue having **face-to-face meetings** for those who are comfortable with coming along, but we fully understand that there are those who are not keen on being out and about unnecessarily. We will be **Zooming the meetings live** as well so everyone can participate. This is one positive of covid, as now our out-of-town members can join us too. The Zoom link will be sent out to members the previous evening by email.

With being at Red Traffic light for covid we can still hold Indoor Meetings; attendees will need to have a Vaccine Pass, scan QR code, and wear masks at the meeting, and space out at least in household/friends bubbles. And of course you should not come to the meeting if you are not feeling well or think you may possibly have been in contact recently with covid (eg travel or visitors from out of town).

### Field Trips

It would be a pity to stop the Atlassing Trips and the Global Big Day because of covid, so at this stage field trips will go ahead.

Field trips would work OK if participants are happy to organise themselves into 'bubbles' of 2, 3 or 4 for carpooling, or take own cars. If you are unhappy to share transport that will be respected.

**Mary Thompson**  
Regional Representative

## Bird Count Trail launch Sunday 10 April at 10 am



There are now ten Bird Count Stations marked with post and signage about every 200m along Queens Drive starting at Prospect Park and ending near Maori Road. These are permanent locations at which to do 5 minute bird counts. The signage has a QR code which links to [birdcount.nz](http://birdcount.nz) website which has been developed to make it easy for members of the public to participate as well.

This Bird Counting Trail through the Town Belt will be launched on **Sunday 10 April at 10 am**, in conjunction with City Sanctuary. We are hoping to get ODT or other reporters along to the launch and it will involve members of Birds NZ carrying out the first 5 minute bird count using the [birdcount.nz](http://birdcount.nz) app. We decided that inviting the public during Covid Red was not going to work but we wanted to get the Count posts publicised soon. City Sanctuary will also help with publicity. So please come along with your binoculars and meet beside **Olveston**; there is good parking in **Cobden Street**. Let me know if you are coming as we want to put on a good showing for photos etc; and I'll send you more info about the event and count posts so that you are well-prepared in case the reporters ask you questions.

We will be running bird identification and guided bird counting events for the public when covid permits.



Mary Thompson  
[nzmaryt@gmail.com](mailto:nzmaryt@gmail.com)



## Progress report: Extracting data from old projects

Readers will recall progress on extracting records from George and Doreen Grants notebook. Since then, I have uploaded a total of 450 records of bird records from the Grant notebook from their trips around the South Island between 1967 and 1995. I've kept separate a further 480 records of black fronted dotterel and cattle egret which is worthy of further investigation. Ela Hunt is helping with this work at the moment. We are extracting from the Classified Summarised Notes records relating to egrets and dotterel to be able to paint a picture of the arrival and establishment of these species not only on the Taieri plains but in New Zealand generally.

When talking to Peter Schweigman about the data from the Grant notebooks he shared with me his data file from his time as Regional Representative and before. Peter's list is 1100 records long and has records starting in 1961 through to 2014. About 119 species have records included in this spreadsheet. A lot of these were given to Peter by other members and so I'm currently going through these and ensuring that the original names are included in the list when it gets uploaded to eBird. There are 180 records of black-fronted dotterel and cattle egret in Peter's spreadsheet as well from all over Otago. Again, I'll keep these separate and include them in the report being written up about dotterels and egret before eventually adding them to eBird.

Older members will remember our Otago and Southland project between 1988 and 1991 to survey kingfishers and their habitats. There are 1600 individual records of kingfisher in this dataset. The original spreadsheet was lost but I've been successful in getting all the data reentered on to a spreadsheet and annotated with additional information which was included in the data sheets. We are now in a position to complete two subsequent projects.



Craig McKenzie

One is to go through the records and see how many of these we can tie to a map reference and then upload to ebird. The second project is to analyse the habitat and activity that was recorded on the survey cards. I think that this will be a significant quantification of the behaviour and habitat use of kingfisher in Southern New Zealand.

If you are interested I'm interested in having volunteers progress these two projects. Let me know if you would like to contribute one way or another.

The other point about this work is the enduring message that if you have notebooks of old observations then have a crack at extracting them onto a spreadsheet so we can upload them to eBird and ensure that the information in them is available for future members. It is better that you do this work with your data rather than relying on subsequent generations to have to tidy up.

**Bruce McKinlay**

## The Wild Dunedin Festival is Coming in April

**The Wild Dunedin team are thrilled to announce that our popular Festival is on again in the school holidays 22 – 28 April.**

The Festival opens with a huge land art sculpture on the beach at Lawyers Head, where Wanaka artists Martin Hill and Philippa Jones will create the work on the sand at low tide. As the tide comes in, the sculpture will be returned to the sea - a lesson in sustainability.

Exciting news for tamariki living at Port Chalmers, Waitati and Waikouaiti is a visit by the Marine Studies Centre's Aqua Van to the libraries in those locations. Thanks to the generosity of Harbour Fish and the Marine Studies Centre, there will be two sessions covering the rocky shore, pāua and the popular touch tank. Bookings for these sessions on 26, 27 and 28 April are essential.

Catch Port to Port's Sootychaser to Quarantine Island for a treasure hunt, or across the harbour to the Marine Studies Centre to learn about seaweed or the lives of sea creatures.

Kids go free at Orokonui Ecosanctuary on 23, 24 and 25 April and receive a Kids Ecosanctuary Explorer Pack.

Suzy Cato will be entertaining tamariki with music sessions at Toitū, and she'll also make an appearance at the very popular Wildlife ER at Otago Museum.

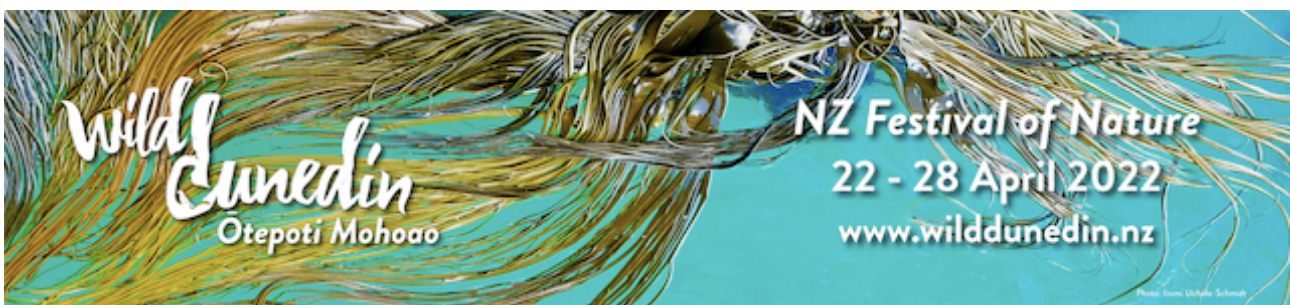
Sea lions are the stars on 27 April when several sessions at Otago Museum will focus on these fascinating locals.

This year gardeners have the opportunity to visit some inspiring gardens, foodies can enjoy a range of special dining experiences, and if you'd like to get active, Resistance Climbing Gym, Watercooled Sports and Esplanade Surf School have special Wild Dunedin deals.

The always popular Birds NZ birdwatching event at Tomahawk Lagoon is at 10am on Sunday 24 April. Thanks to Mary and team for organising this! Contact Andrew if you can help; phone 454 5830

If anyone would like to volunteer for the festival or if you know someone who would like to be a volunteer, please contact Suzanne Middleton [smiddleton7@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:smiddleton7@yahoo.co.nz) or 0226018579.

Online and print programmes available early April. Become a friend on [www.wilddunedin.nz](http://www.wilddunedin.nz) for advance bookings. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.







## Dawn Palmer, November eBirder of the Month

By Team eBird | December 8, 2021

Please join us in congratulating Dawn Palmer of Otago, New Zealand – winner of the November 2021 eBird Challenge, sponsored by Carl Zeiss Sports Optics. Dawn's name was drawn randomly from the 16,351 eBirders who submitted at least 3 eligible checklists on a single day in November.

## NZ Bird Conference 2022

The 2022 NZ Bird Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Birds New Zealand will be held in Christchurch, from **4 to 6 June**. This is an excellent opportunity to hear about new research findings about birds in New Zealand, networking, and field trips for professional and amateur ornithologists, students and others who are interested in birds and their habitats.

There will be several keynote lectures and shorter talks on a wide range of topics. The field trips include Atlassing on Banks Peninsula and Ashley River estuary as well as a tour behind the scenes at Canterbury Museum ornithological collections. **Earlybird registration is by 31 March**; there is the possibility of cancellation due to Covid restrictions and if this happens full refunds will be given.



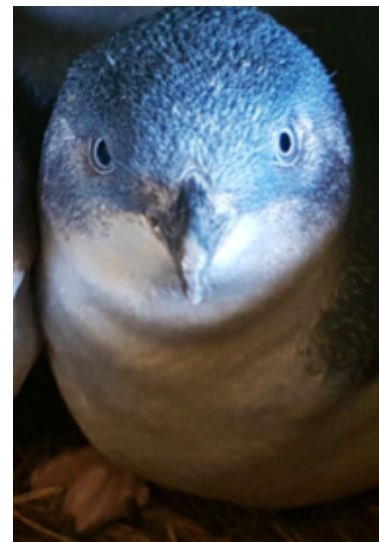
**NZ PENGUIN**  
initiative  
RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

Are there little penguins in your neighbourhood, or your favourite beach?

Would you be interested in looking after them?

We are here to help. [The New Zealand Penguin Initiative](https://www.nzpi.nz) has created a network of community groups throughout NZ that are monitoring little penguins, and we're always looking for more people to join the cause. We provide free support for monitoring, protection, and advocacy to better understand penguin populations throughout NZ, and improve conservation measures to protect them.

If you are interested, please get in touch either on our website [www.nzpi.nz/get-involved](https://www.nzpi.nz/get-involved) or e-mail us [admin@nzpi.net](mailto:admin@nzpi.net)



## Programme 2022

**Monthly Indoor Meetings** will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> **Tuesday** at 7.30pm in the Valley Project Community Rooms, 262 North Road, NEV. Just past the primary school, with a parking area in front. Look for the NZ Falcon Mural.

The meetings will be zoomed live for those unable to attend. We welcome our members from Central Otago area and others who can't get to Dunedin, and members not so comfortable with attending meetings at this time. You can join the meetings by Zoom link. This will be emailed to members the previous evening, so check for the link.

- Tuesday 22 March     Craig McKenzie  
On assignment for NZ Geographic - experiences photographing rare birds for feature articles.
- Saturday 2 April     **Atlasing trip** to the inland Catlins area. Meet at Bunnings at 8.30. Please let me know if you intend coming, so that you can be informed of any changes to the plan.  
Contact Richard 027 281 8701 or [cluthaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com)
- Sunday 10 April     **Bird Count Trail launch.** Meet beside Olveston at 10am  
Contact Mary [nzmaryt@gmail.com](mailto:nzmaryt@gmail.com)
- 10 -12 April         **Atlasing trip** to Motatapu Station  
Contact Richard 027 281 8701 or [cluthaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com)
- Sunday 24 April     **Tomahawk Lagoon Birdwatching** 10am to noon Covid dependent  
A Wild Dunedin Festival event. We will have telescopes available for the public to see birds close-up and assist with identification.  
Contact Andrew if you can help; phone 454 5830
- Tuesday 26 April     Oscar Thomas  
How to identify all those black and white seabirds.
- Saturday 14 May     **Global Big Day Field trips**  
How many species can we see in one day? Carloads of birders will be allocated to a various birding hotspots to ensure good coverage of habitats and species.
- Tuesday 24 May     Anne Schlesselmann  
Tracking migrations of South Island Pied Oystercatchers  
(latest findings from a joint project of Landcare, DOC and Birds NZ)
- Tuesday 28 June     Ursula Ellenberg  
Seabird conservation research between the midnight sun and shadowlands (starting with some pre-pandemic work in Siberia and ending on some recent highlights of our tawaki research in Fiordland.)

**Suggestions of locations for field trips and atlasing trips, and offers to help lead trips would really be appreciated, please contact Mary [birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz](mailto:birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz)**

Please send all contributions for the April newsletter to: Sue Odlin [sodlin@gmail.com](mailto:sodlin@gmail.com)

Final date for copy for next newsletter: **20 April**