



THE WRYBILL

Canterbury Regional Newsletter

MAY 2024

Field Trips:

May 25 - A trip to the Oxford area to do autumn bird counts for the Bird Atlas scheme. Meet at 9am in the carpark of "The Peg" pub in Belfast. We'll coordinate transport from there. Contact Anita Spencer if you would like to come or require more information.

birds.canterbury@birdsnz.org.nz

June 23 - Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere winter count combined with the Spoonbill census. Meet at the end of Embankment Road at 9am.

July 20 - Ashburton Lakes annual count. This is a real highlight for some people with the high country area during its spectacular winter best. Contact Don Geddes for more details. don.geddes@fireandemergency.nz

(Contact Anita if you would like to host a future trip).

Indoor Meetings:

Evening Meetings will take place at 7:30 pm or the last Monday of the month at Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Plenty of parking available,

May 27 - Aimee van der Reis from the University of Auckland. A talk on using eDNA methods to investigate diet in seabirds.

June 24 - Frances Schmechel, Environment Canterbury. Birds & Braids - Canterbury's braided river birds.

July 29 - Bruce Postill, Shorebirds in North Korea.

If you are willing or know someone who would be willing to present at a meeting please let Anita know at birds.canterbury@birdsnz.org.nz



Tomtit - Mistletoe Flat - William Harland

RR's Report

We held our AGM in March at our monthly meeting and I'd like to thank everyone who has put their hand up to take on roles of responsibility this year. I feel that the branch is stronger when we share out the workload and support each other in their roles. I know I've really benefited from the advice and knowledge of the committee. At some point I would like to be able to offer online attendance for our monthly meetings so people further afield could call in. I'm having enough challenges with the current DOC set up though, so let's call it a long term goal.

I did an overnight tramp up to Cameron Hut behind the Ashburton Lakes on Anzac weekend and took the opportunity to do ebirding along the route. I didn't have to search far for kea as seven of them came to

my tent at 5.30am to make sure I didn't sleep in. I was reminded of what inquisitive birds they are as they constantly tested how close they could sneak up on my dog. It did highlight how vulnerable they are too, as they really shouldn't feel that they can get that close safely.

We've got some great field trips coming up over the next two months, including the winter wader count and spoonbill census, and the annual Ashburton Lakes survey. We add valuable information about bird numbers and distribution with these surveys, and they contribute to the Society's goals. I hope to see you at them.

Anita Spencer

News Bulletin

2024 BirdsNZ AGM Conference:

The 2024 New Zealand Bird Conference and AGM of Birds New Zealand programme and event schedule is on page 7-8 of this issue.

Funding Opportunities:

There are still some grants and scholarships available on offer by BirdsNZ <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/research/#funding>

Other Regional Newsletters:

Other BirdsNZ newsletters for other regions can be read at:

- South Auckland Newsletter April: birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/
- Nelson Newsletter March: birdsnz.org.nz/news/nelson-newsletter/
- Otago Newsletter March: birdsnz.org.nz/news/otago-newsletter/

NZ Bird Atlas Final Countdown

Our NZ Bird Atlas project is now in its final month. The 5-year project aimed to collect bird counts across the country in all four seasons by 1 June 2024 via the free-to-use Merlin App and the eBird website. If you would like to contribute your checklists to the Atlas project before it ends, please visit the link: <https://ebird.org/atlasnz/about>

Rambles with Bev Alexander

Rambles are “unofficial” birding field trips hosted by Bev Alexander. All are welcome to participate and most rambles are at accessible locations.

Upcoming Rambles:

June 11th - Visiting Halswell Quarry. Meeting in the car park near the toilets at 9:30 am.

July TBC - Depends on weather, contact Bev for suggestions and queries.

Please let Bev know if you plan to come on any of these rambles.
Email: birdiebev@xtra.co.nz Phone: 027 3184 713

SO MANY WAYS TO HELP OUR BIRDS



Rock Wren
(Image: Ben Ackerley)



Rifleman
(Image: Michael Szabo)



NZ Tomtit
(Image: Michael Szabo)

The Birds New Zealand Research Fund is funding new research on our endemic wrens and tomtits to help inform evidence-based conservation management.

www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/

26 Year-old Black Billed Gull

There have been several black-billed gulls that were banded at both Peacock Springs 1997 and Ashley River 1998 that I have sighted in Suburban Christchurch over the last five years but at this stage E-200216 is the oldest bird.

A "Black billed gull / Tarāpuka seen today on the Heathcote River. This bird E-200126 was banded as a chick last century in December 1998 on the Ashley River! This bird has returned to the Heathcote River over many years. Keeping an eye on this bird which is close to the longevity record for this species. Thanks Sandy Taylor from the DOC banding office in tracking down the details of this special bird"



Banded Black-billed Gull - Peter Langlands

If anyone sights a metal banded black-billed gull in Christchurch I welcome any reports to follow up on.

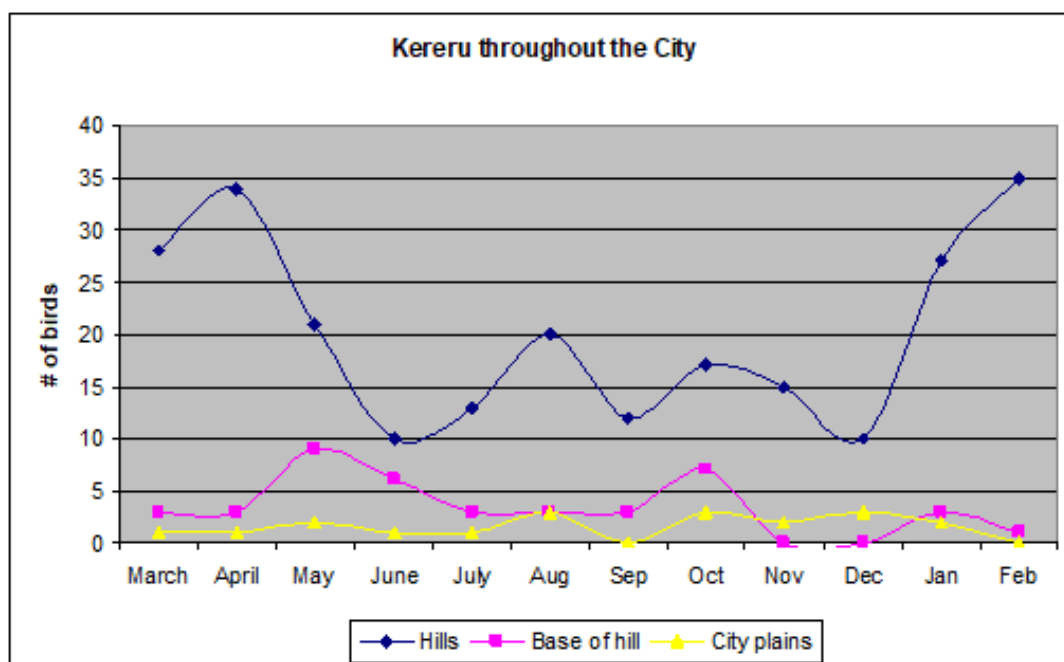
Peter Langlands

Email: langlands@xtra.co.nz

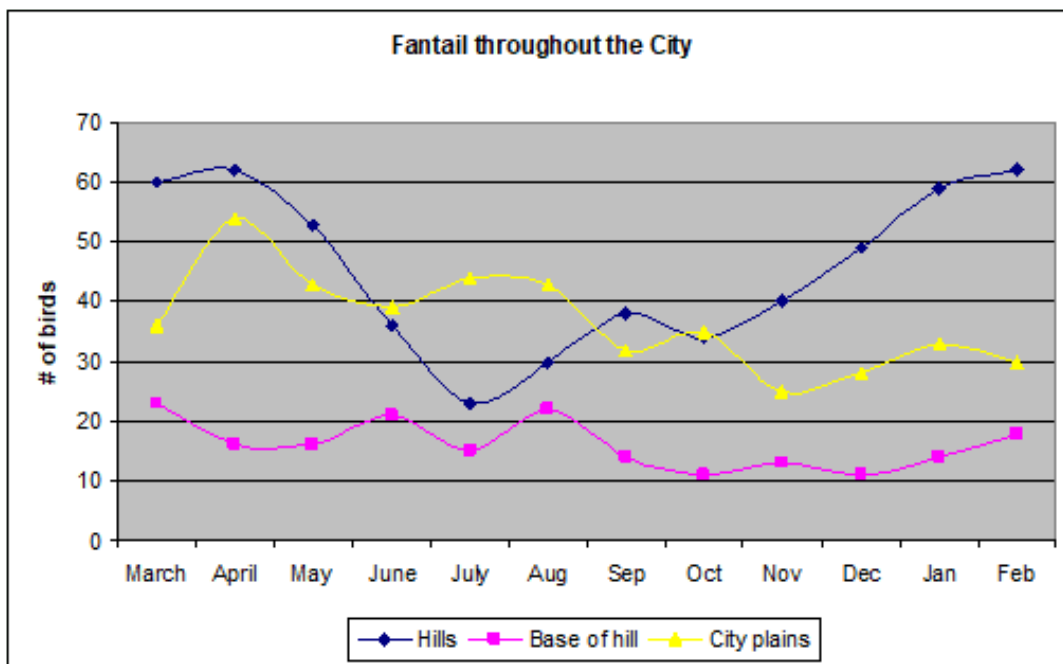
Phone Number: 0274501916

Kereru & Fantail Numbers in Christchurch

Here's a couple of graphs showing Kereru (New Zealand Pigeon) and Fantail abundance on city woodlands showing how numbers on the Port Hills drop in autumn-winter and the base of the hills plus how the city numbers increase (because of altitudinal migration).



Sum total of Kereru recorded by month on all Port Hills transects (n= 13 transects, distance = 10,295m); Base of hills (n=7, 3869m) and City plains (n=14, 7810 m)



Sum total of South Island Fantail recorded by month on all Port Hills transects (n= 13 transects, distance = 10,295m); Base of hills (n=7, 3869m) and City plains (n=14, 7810 m)

By Andrew Crossland

Birds of the Te Araroa

Between November 2023 and March 2024, Natural History curator Colin Miskelly walked the length of Aotearoa New Zealand on Te Araroa Trail – counting every bird seen or heard along the way. In this twentieth blog in the series, Colin describes birds encountered while walking the final section, through the Takitimu, Woodlaw, and Longwood Ranges to Colac Bay, then east along the coast to Invercargill, and south to the trail end at Stirling Point, Bluff.

Read Colin's blog about the final section at:

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2024/03/15/birds-of-te-araroa-19-te-anau-highway-to-bluff/>



Colin Miskelly counting muttonbirds (sooty shearwaters | tītī) from Stirling Point, Bluff
Photo by Kate McAlpine



Winter is coming. Dawn at Telford campsite, Takitimu Mountains
Photo by Colin Miskelly



The Return of “Pōkākā”

The story of the injured Antipodean albatross I Toroa

“Pōkākā” the Antipodean Albatross was found in a paddock on a rural farm in Lincoln. He was named Pōkākā, Maori for storm, as he loved a simulated storm in his pool with waves and the hose in his face during his recovery.

This individual was transported to the South Island Wildlife Hospital, where his long and challenging journey to recovery began. Having already become lost and crash-landing in a location far from where he was supposed to be, “Pōkākā” was also diagnosed with juvenile starvation and a fractured coracoid bone in his chest. Warmer sea surface temperatures result in fish species that albatross feed on remaining at cooler depths, out of range for a large array of our native sea-faring species. This results in parental birds not collecting sufficient amounts of fish for their offspring, and juvenile birds can't find enough food.

During Pōkākā's stay at the wildlife hospital, he contracted avian pox. Due to the highly contagious nature of avian pox it meant vets, volunteers and other staff members needed to be hypervigilant while caring for this individual. He was isolated in his own aviary where we could minimise human contact with vets only, set up sanitising stations and ensure instruments used to care for “Pōkākā” were only used for him while he was in our care.

After 66 days in care, “Pōkākā” was cleared for release by the veterinary staff. We were fortunate enough to have Hamilton Jet offer to take “Pōkākā”, along with two veterinary staff and three volunteers on one of their catamarans out to the heads of Lyttelton Harbour for his release.

After being released back into the ocean, “Pōkākā” immediately began preening, drinking, and strengthening his flight muscles for when an adequate gust of wind would allow him to take flight once again.

By Josh Overend and Pauline Howard

This species is listed as nationally critical by NZTCS and is our most endangered species of Albatross with around 5,100 pairs remaining.

Conference Programme Outline

Friday 31 May	18:00 – 19:30	Registration	Tides Hotel
Saturday 1 June	08:00 – 08:30	Registration	Trafalgar Centre
	08:30 – 09:00	Opening ceremony	Trafalgar Centre
	09:00 – 17:00	Scientific programme day one	Trafalgar Centre
	17:00 – 19:00	Workshops, Posters, Demos, Drinks	Tides Hotel
	19:00	Informal Dinner	Trafalgar Centre
Sunday 2 June	08:00 – 08:30	Registration	Trafalgar Centre
	08:30 – 15:00	Scientific programme day two	Trafalgar Centre
	15:30 – 17:00	AGM and Awards	Trafalgar Centre
	19:00	Conference Dinner	Trafalgar Centre
Monday 3 June	Field trips		

NOTE: the programme of scientific talks is subject to change

Saturday 1 June

08:00-08:30	Registration	
08:30-09:00	Welcome	Mihi whakatau: Archdeacon Emeritus Harvey Ruru QSM; Waiata: E tū Kahikatea (co-composer: Richard Nunns)
09:00-09:30	Graeme Elliott	33 years of monitoring wandering albatrosses on Antipodes and Adams Islands. The sorrows and joys of a long-term study.
09:30-09:45	Richard Holdaway	Would the real pipiwaharoa please stand up? A comparison of morphometric patterns and intraspecific taxonomy of the shining cuckoo
09:45-10:00	Kevin Parker	Using count data and estimates of connectivity to quantify and predict the success of popokatea/whitehead translocations
10:00-10:15	Lawson Davey	47 years of Monitoring the Central New Zealand Black Swan Population
10:15-10:30	Rob Schuckard	Fine-tuning the ageing of juvenile, subadult and adult South Island Pied Oystercatchers
10:30-11:00	Morning tea	
11:00-11:15	James Braund	Ornithological results of the Austrian Novara expedition's visit to Auckland in 1858-1859
11:15-11:30	Emma Williams	Birds beyond borders – Shorebirds that are connecting places and people to maximise New Zealand's national conservation efforts
11:30-11:45	Kath Walker	Comparative analysis of plumage, morphology and biology of Antipodean and Gibson's wandering albatrosses
11:45-12:00	Biz Bell	Towards understanding tākoketai/black petrel recruitment on Aotea/Great Barrier Island
12:00-12:15	Johannes Chambon	Survival modelling of the Critically Endangered Chatham Island tāiko
12:15-12:30	Hiltrun Ratz	New Zealand Penguin Initiative: what's up with Kororā?
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-13:45	Caitlin Lavery	Observations on the Pihoihoi (New Zealand pipit) on the Te Ahu a Turanga Highway project
13:45-14:00	Brian Gill	Gorging on insects: diet of the shining cuckoo in New Zealand
14:00-14:15	Dan Burgin	New Zealand Bird Atlas summary and what lies ahead
14:15-14:30	Inka Pleiss	Negligible Impact of Tape- and Harness-Mounted GPS Data Loggers on Adult Sooty Shearwaters and their Chicks
14:30-14:45	Robin Toy	Post-translocation roroa great spotted kiwi monitoring, how much is enough?
14:45-15:00	Katherine Chamberlain	Volunteer-based five-minute bird counts and their usefulness for assessing bird activity over time
15:00-15:45	Afternoon tea & Poster session	
15:45-16:00	Bruce McKinlay	High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza in wild birds and potential implications for New Zealand
16:00-16:15	Alan Tennyson	Recent advances in New Zealand prion research
16:15-16:30	Viktorija Povilionytė	Behavioral database from camera traps in North Atlantic burrow-nesting seabirds
16:30-16:45	Sabrina Leucht	Impact of decreased ocean productivity on seabirds and the importance of wildlife hospitals as a conservation tool
16:45-17:00	Soapbox session	
17:30-18:30	Tides Hotel: Banding Gathering & Atlas Workshop	
19:00-21:30	Informal dinner	

Sunday 2 June

08:00-08:30	Registration	
08:30-09:00	Natalie Forsdick	An overview of current applications of genetic/genomic data for avian conservation in Aotearoa New Zealand
09:00-09:15	Yvonne Taura	Ngā taonga o ngā manu: Exploring the significance of local manu through a hapū lens with primary school students
09:15-09:30	Oscar Thomas	On the brink: status, movements and variation of the tūturiwhatu southern New Zealand dotterel
09:30-09:45	Maia Gerard	Bird counts of a fragmented forest landscape in Banks Peninsula
09:45-10:00	Philippa Agnew	Comparing the use of flipper bands vs PIT tags for marking kororā at Ōamaru
10:00-10:15	Claudia Mischler	Black-billed gull national census – a follow-up to the 2016/17 census
10:15-10:30	Georgia Thomson-Laing	Using environmental DNA in lake sediment cores to detect historical changes in bird communities
10:30-11:00	Morning tea	
11:00-11:15	Jonathan Rutter	Immersion regularity predicts vessel following by albatrosses
11:15-11:30	Imogen Foote	Whole-genome analyses reveal genetic structure in the highly threatened Antipodean and Gibson's albatrosses
11:30-11:45	Neil Fitzgerald	Movement and feeding behaviour of North Island kākā wintering in rural Waikato
11:45-12:00	Todd Landers	An overview of Auckland Council's regional bird surveys in forest, wetlands and dunes with key findings over its first decade
12:00-12:15	Jodanne Aitken	Over the hills and far away: how to best utilise GPS technology to answer kea movement ecology questions?
12:15-12:30	Brenda Greene	Little birds, big data
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-13:45	Michelle Hawinkels	Why are there so many feral pigeons in a predator-free ecosanctuary?
13:45-14:00	Matt Rayner	Bird counts reveal changing structure of the terrestrial bird community on Rangitāhua/Raoul Island, 1967 – 2023
14:00-14:15	Georgia Gwatkin	A place to call home: investigating the terrestrial habitat selection of kororā at Pōhātu/Flea Bay
14:15-14:30	Colin Miskelly	Every Last Bird – Atlassing the Te Ararua Trail
14:30-14:45	Soapbox session	
14:45-15:00	Closing ceremony	
15:00-15:30	Afternoon tea	
15:30-17:00	AGM and awards	
19:00-21:30	Conference dinner	

Monday 3 June

Field trips

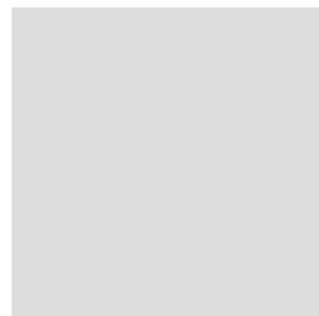
Abel Tasman National Park

Kahurangi National Park: Mt Arthur/Flora or Wangapeka

The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, Nelson

Nelson Wastewater Treatment Plant

Taipare Bay, Marlborough Sounds



Details are available [here](#)

Note:

All field trips are weather dependent and may be cancelled at short notice.

Wear suitable clothing and footwear.

Participants need to bring their own lunch – there is no packed lunch available.

There is a Countdown supermarket a few minutes walk from the Trafalgar Centre.

Bird Sightings

BirdsNZ Report for Canterbury March 2024 - April 2024

Due to Nick Allen's stepping down as Regional Recorder and Ben Ackerley only recently taking on the role. There is no recent sightings report for this issue of the Wrybill. However, here is the Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere Bird Survey for Feb 18 2024 and the Regional Report for the upcoming BirdsNZ Magazine:

	Kaitoreke Tip	Mid K and Crescent Island	Birdings A	Birdings B	Kaituna Lagoon	Halswell A	Halswell B	Obbourmes	Greenpark	Embankment	Yarrrs	Selwyn Lill	Rennies Bay	Doyleston	Harts Creek	Lake Side	Taumutu	Total	2023
Black Cormorant (Shag)	6	31	3	22	6	6	6	4		4	1		3		23	77	32	224	188
Pied Cormorant (Shag)	2		7	8	1		32	1	3	2		7	17	11		1	176	268	271
Little Black Shag												1					1	2	33
Spotted Shag																	3	3	0
White-faced Heron		1	5		1	1	5	18			2	1	1	11		4	9	59	36
Royal Spoonbill	20	3	18	56		136	104	4	6	33	251	52	136	43	42	68	38	1010	612
Variable Oyster catcher																5		5	12
SI Pied Oyster catcher		1					36	1		3		2			2			45	15
Pied Stilt	24	142	40	276	305	396	831	72	402	407	469	162	195	91	106	269	79	4266	3321
Black Stilt				1														1	0
Hybrid Stilt									14									14	2
Banded Dotterel	175	147	160	85	5	178	389	3	2	660	88	31	18	1			9	1951	1771
Wrybill		2								89	150							241	377
Spur-winged Plover	8	24	10	21	4	10	22	6		12			2	5			6	138	185
Red Necked Stint										26								26	27
Curlew Sandpiper										2								2	0
Bar-tailed Godwit	17						123		21	25	35						37	1	259
Pacific Golden Plover		39							10									49	58
Black-fronted Tern	15	8	15	2		1		1										15	57
Caspian Tern	7	4	1	2			4	4	4	1	1	1	3	1				4	37
White Fronted Tern																		137	130
Gull-billed Tern							1												1
Harrier	3	20	7	7	3	7	4			7	6	3	5	11	1	7	4	95	89
Total	277	422	266	480	325	735	1557	114	462	1271	1003	260	380	174	174	474	516	8890	7384

With the ending of summer and the beginning of autumn, a couple new species have popped up around the Canterbury area along with an interesting number of talks.

Although the waders at Lake Ellesmere did not have any more new rarities because of the low lake levels, there were certainly other birds with multiple Arctic Skua, White-winged Black Terns, and a single Antarctic Tern being seen at the lake outlet in late February and very early March.

The Ashley Estuary continued to host some more rare birds with two Common Terns, an Arctic Tern, a return of the Sanderling and the continuing Little Egrets (over a year now). The Little Egrets have developed some of their plumes and the Sanderling is continuing to hang around the Banded Dotterels. The Arctic Tern stayed for a very short period of time on April 4th. The Common Terns have caused some debate as one of the individuals with a red-bill which developed into its breeding plumage at the end of the season is under heavy examination whether it is of the normal subspecies seen in New Zealand (ssp. longipennis) or possibly a different subspecies or species altogether. The last time this individual was seen was early April in full breeding plumage.

The Northern Shoveler at the northern end of Pegasus Wetlands has returned, the earliest it's been sighted in the past few years.

An Australian Shelduck was seen on the Tasman Delta near Glentanner for about a week during late March. Another Common Myna has been spotted near the New Brighton roundabout, joining with the previous individual that has been seen there since 2018. The sighting caused concern among birders with the possibility of establishment so the situation is being dealt with by Environment Canterbury.

The Kōtuku, White Heron have returned to Canterbury with two different individuals being seen in Christchurch near McCormacks Bay and the Linwood/Charlesworth canal, they've been seen in a couple different places around the area so keep your eyes out if you are a local. A Kōtuku has also been seen around the Pegasus area.

In community news, Ben Ackerley has assumed the role of Regional Recorder for the Canterbury BirdsNZ group, we thank Nick Allen for his years of service and great work done in the role. The group started 2024 off with a variety of interesting talks: The Population of New Zealand Scaup by Brenda Green, Bird Migration by Richard Holdaway and Canterbury's Braided River Birds by Francis Schemel.

Members also took part in the Farewell to the Godwits run by the City Council and Bev Alexander's rambles. If you would like to contribute to the Canterbury branch of BirdsNZ, whether it be through a talk, article, or important sighting that you have seen, feel free to contact myself or Anita Spencer, we would be incredibly grateful for any support.

Health and Safety

For everyone to have an enjoyable time on field trips and other activities we need to make sure everyone stays safe. Here's how you can do your bit.

1. Wear clothing appropriate for the activity such as plenty of warm layers, hat and gloves in winter; a sunhat and sunglasses in summer. Bringing a raincoat is always a sensible option. Footwear needs to be suitable as well - think sturdy soles and good ankle support for many walks, especially on hills, something that can get wet and muddy especially at Lake Ellesmere in winter. Walking poles could be helpful to some on steep and/or uneven ground.
2. Be honest and open about your physical abilities. Not all trips will be suitable for everyone. If you have a pre-existing medical condition that could impact the trip (such as - but not limited to - asthma, allergy to bee stings, diabetes) please notify the trip leader of the condition, any problems that could arise and what the trip leader and others may be required to do to assist you. This information will be kept confidential unless a medical event requires it being shared. Make sure you bring whatever medications you may need.
3. Bring enough food and drink for the event plus a little extra in case the trip takes longer than planned. Fresh water is not always available and dehydration can be a concern in summer so bring your own drinking water.
4. Listen to the health and safety briefing given at the beginning of each trip, keep your eye out for any unexpected hazards and talk to the trip leader and others if you have any concerns along the way. Let the trip leader know of any accidents or near misses.
5. Stay with the group at all times unless you have the trip leader's okay.
6. The trip leader reserves the right to decline participation in any trip if they have concerns about anyone being unable to participate safely or not being suitably equipped.
7. Health and safety incidents or concerns must be reported to the trip leader/RR immediately.

Scopes for Loan:

If you are in Canterbury and wish to borrow a scope contact Sandra (sandraw67@gmail.com). If you are on the West Coast and wish to borrow a scope, contact Liz Meek (ronmeek555@gmail.com).

Submissions:

The editor invites members to submit articles and/or photos for the next issue of *The Wrybill*. Please email any contributions through to samuel.amaris.home@gmail.com. Many thanks to everybody who contributed to this edition of *The Wrybill*.



North Island Kokako - Tiritiri Matangi Island - Samuel Amaris

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