

TŌREA PANGO



NELSON BRANCH BIRDS NZ. NEWSLETTER ISSUE 13. May /June 2024.

Obviously, it's been a huge couple of months for the Nelson region. While I personally have had little to do with organising the conference (other than taking the minutes of the regional reps meeting), I have been aware of the hordes of emails, zoom meetings, actual meetings, trips to banks, trips to printers, more trips to banks etc. I've also realised that all the things like seating, liquor licencing, catering, I.T. facilities, timing of presentations, printing conference bags, registration details, cultural protocols and untold other things which a mere conference attendee would only notice if they went wrong, have engendered a tremendous workload for the committee to ensure smooth and seamless operation. To be honest I'm in awe of this group of people taking on what is essentially a full-time professional job and achieving what by all accounts has been an enormously successful conference and a total credit to our region. Bullet dodgers like me can only express our sincere gratitude and praise to you all! Think I'll stick to cobbling together a newsletter! Hopefully we will have reports of field trips, presentations etc. in the next couple of issues. In fact, this is a perfect opportunity for anyone who attended a particularly worthwhile, educational or simply enjoyable conference session to send me in a report. No excuses this time!

LAST MEETINGS

May 13th

- 20 members attended in person and 5 via Zoom
- Michelle gave an update on Conference preparations.
- Alan Bridgland talked about what to do with all those photos. (see below)

June 11th

- 15 members attended in person and 1 via zoom
- Mark welcomed new members (Graham Elliot -well I don't think he's 'new' -more recycled!)
- Michelle Bradshaw gave a report on the biggest and best NZBirds conference ever! (see below)
- Michelle also gave a talk on her amazing year spent on Marion Island. (see below)
- Rob Jones showed photos from a conference field trip to Wakapuaka. (see below)

Dealing with Images Alan Bridgland

We probably all have thousands of images --in my case around 95,000! - sitting on a hard drive that we never look at and will doubtless disappear into a tech recycling centre when our kids finally clear up behind us! Or boxes of degrading transparencies hidden in in a shed. So why not do something with them? Having them cycle through as a screen saver on your computer or TV is one possibility, but what about self-publishing a book of your very very best?

Alan Bridgland works for Copy Press, the organisation that has published "Birds of the Nelson/Tasman Region and where to find them" by our very own Peter Field. Starting with the manuscript and photos it took several weeks of work to produce this publication. Alan talked about things to consider when manipulating images for printing. While digital images look good on a screen because they are backlit, they can appear much less impressive when printed. Careful selection of high resolution, fully focused material

is essential. Many colours that appear on a screen can't be reproduced on paper. However, processing can add contrast and saturation and generally improve quality enormously. Alan also talked about transparencies which, being taken many years ago, often contain important historical information. Transparencies start to degrade after 15-20 years so, if they are significant, they need to be digitalised. Commercial options are available to do this, but if you are going for a home option make sure that you purchase a scanner with good quality optics.

The ballpark cost of self-publishing a book is around \$2000 depending on size and number of copies. A final tip from Alan- if you are serious about processing or further utilising your photos always save them in TIF or RAW format.

Photos from OSNZ Conference trip to Wakapuaka *Rob Jones*

Rob gave a brief report at the June meeting and showed some photos of the BirdsNZ conference trip to Wakapuaka oxidation ponds.



Left -Grey teal and dabchick. Right-A super friendly Marsh (Baillon's) crake that was happily feeding just 3-4 metres in front of the 24 people in the group!

Rob also talked about this white-headed petrel that he found as a beach wreck, still alive but obviously in serious trouble. Not a bad tick on a life list! and the bird was able to be revived, living for a few months before eventually succumbing to a respiratory infection.





If you find sick or injured birds, there are a couple of people in our area licenced for bird rehabilitation.

Seabirds and Seals

Mana Stratton

Mahana

035432259

Bushbirds

Jan Boyd

Tadmores Valley

035224229

Please note the article below before handling ANY sick birds.

Bird Flu

There is obviously increasing concern around the potential impact of HPAI H5N1 bird flu on our birdlife, our poultry industry and indeed ourselves. Bird Flu probably deserves a full article in a future newsletter (would someone like to write one please?) Meanwhile this is part of the latest update: Beach wreck recorders beware!

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



What to look out for

The most obvious sign of HPAI is sudden death in several birds. Other signs in birds can include weakness, tremors, paralysis, difficulty breathing, lack of co-ordination, blindness, trembling and diarrhoea.

Do not handle sick or dead birds.

What if I find sick or dead birds?

If you see 3 or more sick or dead birds in a group, report it immediately to Biosecurity New Zealand's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on 0800 80 99 66.

Provide as much detail to Biosecurity New Zealand as you can, including:

- a GPS reading or other precise location information
- photographs and/or videos of sick and dead birds
- species identity and estimate of numbers affected
- note how many are sick or freshly dead, and the total number present.

Biosecurity New Zealand will take details and an incursion investigator will be in contact with you. Follow Biosecurity New Zealand's instructions for handling sick or dead birds.

“The Wanderer -Tales of an islander” -Marion Island Michelle Bradshaw

There probably aren't many who have spent as much time in remote places with as few home comforts as Michelle. On completing her postgraduate studies, she travelled for 10 years largely volunteering to work on remote islands, monitoring fauna and flora.

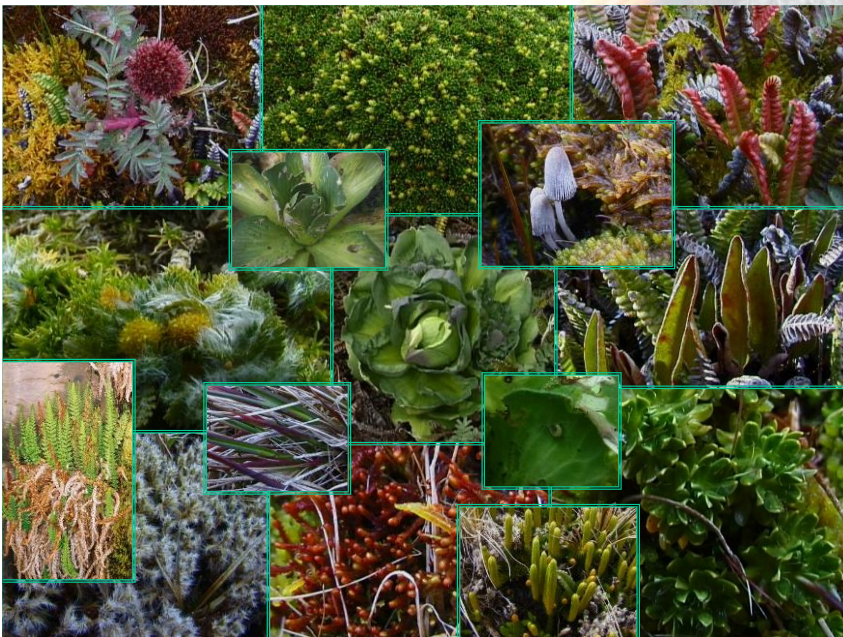


This fascinating talk at the June meeting focussed on the year Michelle spent on Marion Island some 20 years ago. Marion island is in the Prince Edward Island group and is 5 days by boat from Cape Town.

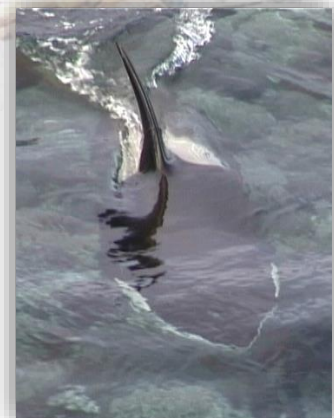
The island experiences a generally inhospitable climate- windy and buffeted by the roaring 40's with a mean temperature of just 5C and a high of 12C. It snows 60% of the time. She was dropped there as part of a team of 13 people from 8 different cultures who were to spend the next year together, monitoring the island's biology. Fortunately, they all got along. Unfortunately, the cheese supply was not sent, which combined with a biosecurity ban on fresh food items created a number of cravings!



Several of the team had never experienced temperatures below 20C nor seen the sea and Michelle was fascinated by their reactions.



The plant life on the island is all small, presumably an adaptation to the cold temperatures and buffeting winds. Some plants are so slow growing and easily damaged that if they are stood on, the footprint can remain visible for 30 years! Marine mammals appeared to be everywhere!





Marion island is still an active volcano and covers an area about $\frac{1}{2}$ the area of lake Taupo. Much of the surface is covered in either lava, which is sharp and dangerous to traverse, or bog which you tend to sink into.

Several species of penguin (gentoo macaroni, king, rockhopper, and royal) have colonies on the island and the team were responsible for counting, monitoring, banding etc.



1

2



3

4



5

Photo 1 Royal penguin colony. Photo 2 Gentoo penguin. Photo 3 Macaroni penguin. Photo 4 Rockhopper penguin. Photo 5 Montage of King penguins.

Counting numbers poses its own difficulties depending on the species. The density of the Royal colonies in itself was a problem, and birds were counted in groups of 50. Royal penguins nest in amongst often inaccessible rocks and when you get to them, they will jump up and bite you. King penguins take 13 months to fledge, and the colony can have chicks in all stages of development. Interestingly these birds make no nest and can walk around carrying their eggs. Michelle was not overimpressed by the 'intelligence' of these birds which for example will spend days trying to release their feet from kelp by attempting to walk forward rather than simply backing out.

The island is divided into zones with levels of restricted access. As 'Albatross Officer' Michelle was the only person allowed into one of these areas which meant that she was often working alone. As part of her monitoring duties, she had to walk around the island monthly, in addition to daily visits to monitoring sites, a total of 3000km during the year, all in gumboots!

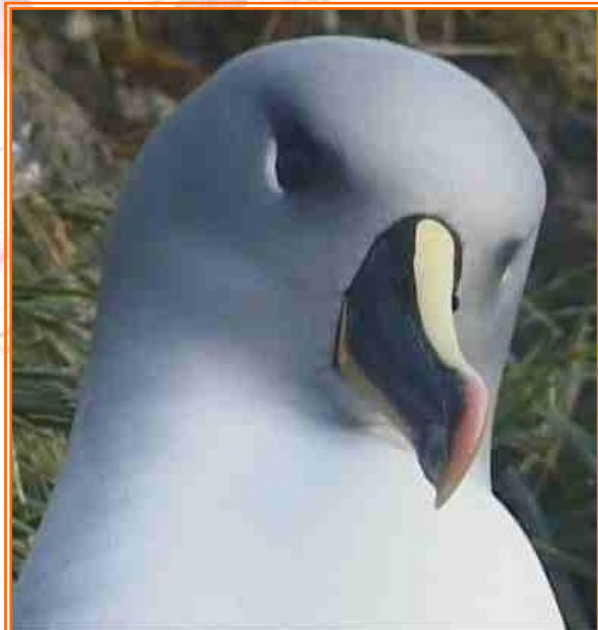


Several species of albatross nested on the island including wandering. Males of this species would get very tame, even putting their leg out for her to read the band number!

Photo below- Montage of wandering albatross



Sooty albatross (left below) also bred there, as well as grey headed, (right) although it was a two day walk to reach the colony.



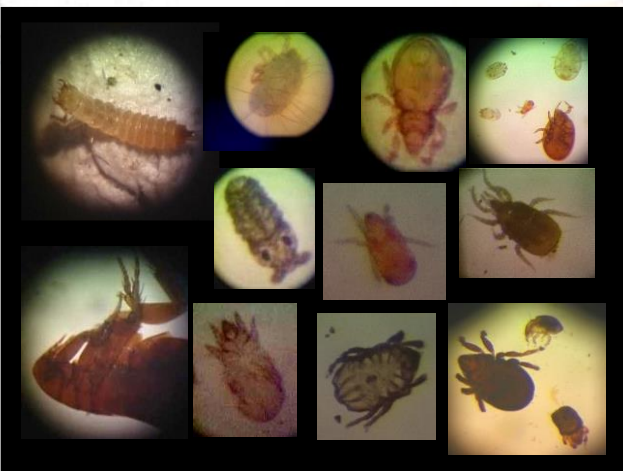
Apart from the albatross, there was plenty of other bird life, including a mouthwatering selection of petrels shearwaters and prions that many birders would die for.



Top left Sheathbill. Top right-The amazing Crozet shag,
Plus, a vast range of other wildlife from elephant seals and orcas to-----



Springtails, fleas and mites.



I really can't do more in the newsletter than give you a tease of this superb talk! Do consider coming to our meetings. They are pretty exciting these days and you even get a cup of tea and an only mildly stale biscuit. You could even drag along a friend. Great talk, many thanks Michelle. *Please note- All photos are credited to Michelle Bradshaw and are copyright*

Harrier Roost

David Melville reports discovering a harrier ‘roost’ being utilised by up to 19 birds. A quick search shows that such roosts are well documented with as many as 100 birds being recorded! Apparently roosts only occur in NZ and not in Australia, which sounds like the start of a nice research thesis for someone. We await more information on the location, but it seems like a spectacular thing to see.

Garden bird Survey

Just a reminder that the NZ Garden Bird Survey which apparently is New Zealand’s largest and longest-running citizen science project is about to begin, and they invite “everybirdy” to join in.

The New Zealand Garden Bird Survey has been running for 17 years and researchers are seeing real trends emerging. The challenge now is to keep going and to collect as much information as possible.

This ongoing data serves to confirm if the trends scientists see is just a blip or something that needs further investigation. It’s important to keep counting as you become the eyes and ears of scientists who can’t possibly be in all the places they need to all at the same time

Grab your whānau, friends, and neighbours – it’s time to head into the garden (or local park) for one hour on any day between sunrise on Saturday, 29 June and sunset on Sunday, 7 July, and count all the birds you see or hear.

Here is the link <https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/>

Member Profile: Rebecca Bowater

You’ve all seen those wonderful photos of terns and godwits, but who is the person behind the camera? I rang Rebecca to get the ‘goss.’ Rebecca was brought up in Nelson and with a botanist father (who was director of Parks and Reserves) and a mother who was a horticulturalist, short of total rebellion she had no chance of *not* developing a love for plants. Tramps into our local alpine regions with her father gave familiarity with the variety and beauty of our unique species, their identification and scientific names. A career in nursing put a temporary hold on things. But later, she was able to join a tramping club and with trips into alpine regions was able once again to focus on NZ flora, particularly the stunning shapes and colours of fungi. Starting with a simple point and shoot camera Rebecca was soon hooked on photographing the plants she found. - So much so that her images are now widely sought after. She has two published botanical books “New Zealand Alpine Flora” and ‘New Zealand Fungi’ and received a Fellowship with the Photographic Society of NZ [in Nature category] in 2006.

Prior to 2008 Rebecca had little interest or knowledge of birds. However, a serious illness cut short not only a major trip to Alaska, but also put a temporary stop on her ability to access interesting plant and fungi areas. The desire to capture images of living things was still burning and, living in Atawhai, she regularly saw ‘birds’. One day, on a trip to the Boulder Bank she stumbled across a ‘bloke with a scope’, --Peter Field. Rebecca describes how helpful and friendly he was, showing and naming birds that she didn’t know existed. She was hooked!

Since then and with returning health, the Alaska trip has happened and there have also been dedicated birding trips to Florida, South Georgia and Costa Rica. Many members will have seen the fabulous images of these visits that Rebecca has been able to capture and show at our meetings.

It won’t surprise people to know that Rebecca’s favourite birding spot is the Mot Sandspit. But when asked about her best birding moment, she could hardly keep the emotion from her voice as she describes being taken ashore at 2.00am. on a January morning in St Andrew’s Bay, South Georgia. They were told to walk up a hill and sit quietly at the top. Below were half a million King penguins.

There is no doubt that a great photo requires patience, understanding of the subject and a great deal of time and dedication. It also needs decent gear. For now, Rebecca is sticking to the tried, trusted and respected Canon 7D with a 300mm lens. And if you want a fix of Rebecca’s pics, she gives talks and presentations on a regular basis to various interest groups and clubs around the area. *Note: The tōrea pango now watermarking this letter is one of Rebecca’s photos.*



Rebecca in her natural environment.

And talking of Rebecca –

How about these great photos that Rebecca shared at the May meeting.



I'm sure I don't really need to label them, but each photo has that wonderful quality of capturing a moment.



Conference Feedback – A quick overview of the Biggest and Best Conference Ever!!!! Michelle Bradshaw

Clearly the BirdsNZ 2024 Nelson Conference has been a huge success. And as I said above, congratulations to all involved. Michelle has been right at the pointy end of leading this event and at the June meeting she gave an entertaining and full report. I'll let some of her slides do the talking.

4233 Emails
455 Files
263 Humans

Planning	169
Abstracts	65
Cloth bags	44
Programme	17
Debrief	1
Photos	53
Printing	32
Name Tags	26
Electronic display	38

Inbox	65	Registrations	78
Sent	930	Registr correspondence	151
Conf	6	Pending	30
AGM	4	Confirmed	323
Catering	83	Cancelled	45
Committee	474	Partial refunds	46
Welcome	22	Late registration requests	120
Venues	94	Website registration form	39
Covid notices	25	Scientific presentations	159
Event marketing	93	Scrapbox	24
Exhibitors	23	Abstracts	106
Field guide	14	Oral	139
Field trips	168	Poster	43
Finances	111	General enquiries	17
Logo	2	Pending responses	56
MembershipWorks	11	Responses received	206
Photo competition	29	Sponsors & Exhibitors	45
Post-conf correspondence	27	Altitude Conservation	7
Prizes	26	FaunaTech	31
Quizzes	12	ForFlora	4
		NCC Cloth bags	165
		Potton & Burton	3
		ToiToi wines	27
		Volunteers	61
		Website info	84

As well as her hallmark graphs, charts, and spreadsheets that mere mortals can only gaze at in awe, there were also many pictures of people interacting, learning and just having a good time. But if anyone thought organizing a conference was easy, take a look at her breakdown of these 4233 conference related emails!!



Thanks to Mark for keeping everyone on their toes



Special thanks to Graeme for the AV setup!



Pete's marvellous nametag stands

Many thanks are due to many people-Just think of the work making that nametag stand!



Fascinating talks



High-profile attendees



... and at the end of each long day,
people were still talking!

New Membership Promotion Design

This is the latest promotional design from BirdsNZ -minus spelling mistakes.

Also, the latest statistics for our newsletter:

'The 27 April post of the latest Nelson regional newsletter reached 1,238 people and had 33 engagements.

That's a lot of people that read or at least glance at our newsletter.

SO MANY WAYS TO HELP OUR BIRDS



The Birds New Zealand Research Fund helps fund research on our endemic Kiwi-Nui, Takahe and Tawaki to help inform evidence-based conservation and management.

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

JOIN US NOW



National Royal Spoonbill Population Census 2024

While this has been sent out, it probably bears repeating here. We have received this information from Mary Thompson, the survey coordinator. Please have a read and see how you might be involved.

Introduction and description of project

Royal spoonbill arrived naturally from Australia about 100 years ago, and now breed in New Zealand and are considered native. They have become a spectacular and enjoyable addition to our estuary bird life.

Birds New Zealand has the rare opportunity to accurately document the increase in the population of this new colonizer. In 1979 only 26 royal spoonbills were found in the whole of NZ. Since then, their numbers have dramatically increased by about 10% per annum over the last 2 decades. The last census in 2012 recorded 2361 birds. Another systematic, coordinated, full census is planned to take place in the winter of 2024. Each Birds NZ Region will include this census in their programme, and oversee and coordinate the fieldwork for their region so that all counts in their region take place on the same day in order to minimize double counting. This will provide the information needed to find out the rate at which the royal spoonbill population is increasing in New Zealand.

Objectives

- Survey all likely locations and count number of royal spoonbills at all likely locations in one region on the same day.
- Determine total royal spoonbill population in mainland New Zealand.
- Provide new data to compare with previous data to determine the increase in the population of royal spoonbill and the rate of increase.

Methods

Timing of census: midwinter 2024

Spoonbills start moving northwards to their wintering grounds around April and remain there until towards the end of August when they begin moving back to their breeding areas, so an ideal window of opportunity to do a census is in June and July when the birds are more settled and easily observed. Spoonbills probably move around their wintering area, so for the census to be successful, wherever possible the census should take place at an appropriate tide on the same day in each region (and neighboring regions if estuaries are close by) to minimize double counting.

Some regions will undertake the spoonbill count when carrying out the winter wader count, but keeping in mind that not all spoonbills may be with the waders.

Regional Representatives or nominee are to coordinate the counts. Choose a date when birds can be counted around a tide when they are roosting or easily observed.

Locating roosting flocks

- Prior to census day, determine areas where flocks may be present by a systematic review of possible areas using tools such as eBird Explore function and local knowledge. They may not roost at same sites as other waders. They may roost in trees.
- Aerial surveys may be needed to locate flocks in remote areas.

Location and Count Data

- Determine geo-coordinates of location of birds, either by reference to Google Earth or topographic maps. (e.g. not just Manukau Harbour, but where in the harbour)
- Describe of the habitat where birds found (tidal, paddocks, trees, islands, rocks)
- Take photographs from as many angles as possible to show flock; these may be useful for estimating numbers. [Images of birds in flight may be useful for determining juvenile moult and will be forwarded to David Melville for analysis.]
- Count the number of birds present. (Give some indication accuracy of count; disturbance by vehicles, etc)
- If counts are from images, please indicate methodology.
- Record all locations surveyed, even with NIL birds present

Keep disturbance to a minimum

- Always keep disturbance to a minimum.

- If possible, counts should be made from a vantage point nearby or overlooking the roosting flock.
- Images of roosting flocks from which to count birds may be taken from vantage points, or from aerial views from fixed wing plane or drone flyover. If light plane or drone flyover is used to obtain images, follow all aviation guidelines and plan for minimal disturbance of birds.

Use of Drones to obtain aerial images.

- All the logistics for using drones to obtain aerial images is entirely up to the Region undertaking the survey.
- Each Birds NZ Region will be responsible for obtaining any permissions or permits that are required for flying drones over private land or areas administered by the Department of Conservation. The guidelines for the use of drones will be adhered to.

<https://www.aviation.govt.nz/drones/part-101-rules-for-drones/> Aviation Security Services.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/apply-for-permits/recreational-drone-use/> Department of Conservation.

- Drone-induced disturbance can be problematic. Therefore, it is advised that drones should be launched and brought to altitude at least 100m away from roosting birds, or further if possible, and flown above 50m, but below 120m (aviation rules), and aborted if disturbance occurs.

Health & Safety:

Birds New Zealand Health and Safety Plan will be adhered to.

Data Recording:

Print copies of field log for each participant.

Please transfer data from field logs to spreadsheet and return to Mary Thompson nzmaryt@gmail.com

eBird: please submit an eBird checklist with number of birds via eBird NZ portal; in comments, please enter "census"

PLEASE RETURN SURVEY RESULTS BY 31 August 2024 TO:

Mary Thompson, Survey Coordinator

Email: nzmaryt@gmail.com

And the following from the 'Spoonbill Committee'

After the great success of the conference, we are now looking at organizing our part of the National Royal Spoonbill Winter Census 2024. The aim is to count all main spoonbill roost sites in the region at high tide on the same date.

Date for the Nelson Tasman Region:

Sunday the 28th of July (high tide in Nelson at 3:00 pm with 3.7m).

The backup date is Sunday the 11th of August (high tide in Nelson at 1:47 pm with 3.6m)

Contact:

If you like to get involved, please email your contact details and your preferred sites for the Nelson/Richmond area to: Jane Meiforth, email: jj.meiforth@posteo.de

The Golden Bay part of the count will be coordinated by Richard Stocker and Patsy Garrett, email:

rv.stocker@gmail.com

Registered observers for the Nelson/Richmond area:

The following observers are already registered for the Nelson/Richmond area (Golden Bay not included): William Cook, David Melville, Jenny Edwards, Kathryn Richards, Serge Crottaz, Craig Martin, Maggie Atkinson, Tom Young, Maria Clement, Gillian Pollock, Robin & Sandy Toy, Malcolm Ives, Debs and John Hughes, Mike Crawford, Jane Meiforth.

Protocol:

The count follows a nationwide protocol. In the pdf files attached, you will find more information about the count and a field log that you can print out. The records should contain the location with coordinates, date, time, number of birds with +/- accuracy, the type of habitat and the name of the observer.

Documentation:

All counts will be registered in an online excel sheet and in eBird. You can provide the field protocol, if you do not

have the software access. We are encouraged to take photos and upload them to eBird. More information about the documentation will be send to the observers closer to the count.

Thank you for your support!

Best wishes from the Nelson/Tasman spoonbill committee!

[Jane Meiforth, Jenny Edwards, David Melville, Richard Stocker and Patsy Garrett]



Royal spoonbill | Kōtuku ngutupapa. Adult male in breeding plumage. Wairau Bar, Marlborough, September 2014. Image © Rebecca Bowater by Rebecca Bowater FPSNZ AFIAP

Birds Nelson and Birds Marlborough, Marlborough Birding

Weekend.

Apart from it being nice to get on with our neighbours, (anyone remember the “Small Faces”?) this looks like a really good opportunity for a great field trip. All you need to know should be below. Many thanks to Sharen Graham for organizing this.

Sat 29 June

1. Grovetown Lagoon.

Meet at 9.30 at the car park on Steam Wharf Road (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/BChqxsGvCPRKcooNA>).

Approx 3.8 km for the circuit on paths.

Recommend roughly 2 hours here.

2. Taylor Dam, Taylor Pass Road.

Convoy from Grovetown Lagoons (would travel through town so people could pick up lunch if they wanted), arrive to Taylor Dam (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/gFnVhx7G6v68fCvX8>) around lunchtime.

Nice spot to have lunch and there are toilets there.

Do a loop of Taylor Dam which takes about 30-45 minutes at a leisurely birding pace.

3. Wairau Lagoons Area (rest of afternoon)

Meet at 1.30pm at the carpark at the end of Hardings Road, Riverlands.

5-minute walk from the carpark to view one of the good poo ponds. Then we can proceed out to the Wairau Lagoons themselves along the walkway to one of the high tide roosts. In June, the birding isn't usually that good because none of the Arctic migrants are there (apart from a few overwintering godwits) but it is still a nice walk and there are other birds around!

~3hrs out there. If that was too long then can go just back up the road from the end of Hardings Road and there is the Kotuku Walkway which follows the Opaoa River. Very nice walk and usually some good birding. This could be a 1.5-2hr return trip.

Sun 30 June

1. Lake Elterwater

Meet at the carpark beside SH1 at 0900 (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/yNDkgWJeHnE1Duz17>).

We can spend an hour or so birding the lake. Dave Barker has a property next to Elterwater where we could go for a cup of tea and another different view of the lake afterwards. Pat Crowe (Birds Marlborough RR) will contact Dave about this.

2. Lake Grassmere

Convo to Grassmere after. We can spend the rest of the morning/early afternoon here. We could have lunch at the Marfell's Beach DOC campsite then that leaves plenty of time for people to travel back to Nelson in the afternoon.

3. Beacon Road Reserve

Backup option if other spots are not accessible for some reason!

This is a link to an active Google Sheet on which people should sign up.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T4LFPoXaF7i697-2r1qz6QUzLsnxtE3XDBgC5MfDv1Q/edit#gid=449179341>

That's it folks. Get those conference presentation and trip reports to me for the next newsletter. Cheers Paul

