

# THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

## OSNZ — Birds New Zealand

[birdsanz.org.nz](https://birdsanz.org.nz) and [birdsanz.org.nz/society-publications/notornis/](https://birdsanz.org.nz/society-publications/notornis/)

June 2024



Greetings

The last three months has been marked by some major changes to the Wellington Branch of Birds New Zealand. A very big thank you to Johannes Fischer has stepped aside from his role of the Wellington Regional Representative (RR) after serving in this role for three years.

Johannes brought his expertise and a deep interest in ornithology, especially seabirds to the RR role. Speakers at the monthly meetings have come from throughout New Zealand thanks to Zoom. The new RR is Annemieke Hamilton who I am sure will be an excellent replacement for Johannes. You are reminded that the Wellington Branch not only requires a good RR but also support from local members.

Geoff de Lisle

### Annemieke Hamilton, Wellington Birds New Zealand Regional Representative

Tēnā koutou katoa.

Ko te mihi tuatahi, ki ngā mana whenua o te rohi nei, ko Te Āti awa, ko Ngāti Toa rangatira, ngā mihi nui.

I tipu ake au i raro i te maru o te maunga ō Mania.

Ko Whangārei-te-rerenga-parāoa te moana i rere kopikopiko nei i taku papa kāinga.

Nō Hōrana, Ingarani, me Hāmene ōku tupuna.

I tipu ake au i Whangārei.

E noho ana au ki Te-Whanganui-a-tara ināiane.

He manu kaiwhakapiwari tōku mahi ki Te Papa Atawhai

Ko Hendriks te whānau, engari,

Ko Annemieke Hamilton tōku ingoa.

Hello to you all.



Firstly, I acknowledge the cultural significance of this region for the iwi of Te Āti awa and Ngāti Toa rangatira.

I grew up in the shadow of Mount Manaia.

The Whangārei harbour meandered past my childhood house.

My ancestry is from Holland, England and Germany.

I grew up in Whangārei and now live in Wellington.

I band birds and work at the Department of Conservation

My name is Annemieke

Kia ora, hopefully for most I'm a somewhat familiar face, but for those who do not know me, hello, I'm Annemieke, and I'm the new BirdsNZ Regional Representative (RR) for Wellington. I have taken over from Johannes Fischer, who has superbly directed and supported the Wellington region over the last 3 years. Many thanks to Johannes for his work and commitment to the role.

I am especially pleased to represent this region, knowing that it is characterised by many knowledgeable and passionate individuals. I look forward to engaging with you all further and building upon the great work of the group and recent RRs Johannes and Geoff.

Not only do I have an obvious interest in birds, but I also have an interest in islands, islands species and island biogeography, particularly in New Zealand – in fact, one of my life goals is to get to as many off-shore NZ islands as I can. While my masters focused on investigating the applicability of a theoretical concept (the island rule) in plant species, I now work at the Department of Conservation in the National Bird Banding Office. In this role, I have been fortunate to meet and engage with New Zealand's leading ornithologists and chiropterologists (bat experts), and I have been especially privileged that those based in Wellington so willingly provide their time and knowledge to encourage and foster the learning of others. I hope to make the most of this experience and will work to foster more field opportunities for our members. I enjoy art, photography, board games, learning te reo and engaging with others. I am looking forward to meeting with you all during one of our monthly meetings in person, or online, or perhaps on a birding mission. If you have any questions, comments concerns or ideas, please feel free to reach out.

Nāku noa, nā

Annemieke Hamilton

## Wellington Birds New Zealand Monthly Meetings

### July Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Monday 01 July during which **Wendy Ambury** from the **LOVE BITTERN! Project** will present a talk about "*The Love Bittern Project*" which is dedicated to helping community groups lead the conservation of Australasian bittern | *Matuku-hūrepo (Botaurus poiciloptilus)* throughout Aotearoa, New Zealand. Wendy will provide a brief summary of bittern basics, what is happening on a nationwide scale, features of an intact bittern habitat and how you can help join 'The Great Matuku Muster' to record bitterns during their breeding season in Spring when males are booming.

As usual, this will be a hybrid meeting, you can join the meeting on **Monday 01 July from 7.30 pm** in two ways:

1. In person at the Te Papa Collections Building, 169 Tory Street.
2. Online via the Zoom Meeting via the following link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86364235955?pwd=btzmwdpyO7VRS36CIFCzUwiWbkltAs.1>

**The meeting will start at 7.45pm.**

### Recent Meetings

Monday 08 April. **Jordana Whyte from the Dunedin Wildlife Hospital "Hatching hope: caring for hoiho at Dunedin Wildlife Hospital"**. Jordana is the Trust Manager for the Wildlife Hospital Dunedin, an organisation she co-founded in 2015. In her talk Jordana described the major decline of the hoiho population in the South Island and the central role the Wildlife Hospital is playing to save this population from local extinction. In 1990 there were 500 pairs of hoiho in the South Island while this number was only 125 in 2023. Disease is a major cause of the decline with heavy mortalities from diphtheritic stomatitis, respiratory distress syndrome and avian malaria. Deaths from respiratory distress syndrome occurs in chicks greater than 5 days of age and less than 12. These deaths can be avoided by taking chicks into care during this vulnerable period and then returning the chicks to the parents to raise them to fledge. During the last breeding season 172 chicks were taken into temporary care with a 97% success rate. While the chicks

are in care the adults are given artificial eggs. An illustrated summary from New Zealand Geographic of the project of looking after the chicks can be found at the following <https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/intensive-care/> There is a major cost in running the Dunedin wildlife hospital which is a registered charity, supported by the community and funders who share our vision of thriving wildlife in Aotearoa New Zealand. <https://www.wildlifehospitaldunedin.org.nz/>

The following two papers provide some insight into the possible cause of the respiratory distress syndrome affecting hoiho.

[Total infectome investigation of diphtheritic stomatitis in yellow-eyed penguins \(\*Megadyptes antipodes\*\) reveals a novel and abundant megrivirus.](#)

Wierenga JR, Grimwood RM, Taylor HS, Hunter S, Argilla LS, Webster T, Lim L, French R, Schultz H, Jorge F, Bostina M, Burga L, Swindells-Wallace P, Holmes EC, McInnes K, Morgan KJ, Geoghegan JL. *Vet Microbiol.* 2023 Nov;286:109895. doi: 10.1016/j.vetmic.2023.109895. Epub 2023 Oct 20. PMID: 37890432 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37890432/>

[A novel gyrovirus is abundant in yellow-eyed penguin \(\*Megadyptes antipodes\*\) chicks with a fatal respiratory disease.](#)

Wierenga JR, Morgan KJ, Hunter S, Taylor HS, Argilla LS, Webster T, Dubrulle J, Jorge F, Bostina M, Burga L, Holmes EC, McInnes K, Geoghegan JL. *Virology.* 2023 Feb;579:75-83. doi: 10.1016/j.virol.2022.12.012. Epub 2023 Jan 2 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36608597/>

Monday 06 May. **Etienne Ossana de Mendez from Auckland University** presented a summary of his PhD project which aims to address the ongoing decline of tītī (Sooty shearwater) on Kāpiti island. He is investigating the impact of weka and other environmental factors weighing on the survival of the tītī population. This work is organised through a process of structured decision-making with a first noho that took place in March 2024. Together with Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, Department of Conservation, and the University of Auckland. The goal of the study is to co-design ways forward for tītī and weka on Kāpiti island. The presentation was the introductory talk of last March noho, giving a broad overview of the past and present situation for tītī and weka on Kāpiti island.

## Reminder, National Spoonbill Survey – Winter Count

The Wellington Region will be surveyed for spoonbills on **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024**. This is part of a national survey. Aiming for the region to be covered between 09:00am - 12:00pm. All census records taken throughout Saturday will be accepted, but members are encouraged to try focus attention at the same time in the morning, to minimise the potential for birds moving and consequently being under or over counted. For further details, see email from Birds Wellington on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June which includes a copy of the field log.

## Birds New Zealand Conference and AGM, 2024

The **2024 New Zealand Bird Conference and Birds NZ AGM** was held at the Trafalgar Centre, Nelson from 1-3 June. This was the largest ever conference, with over 230 people attending. There were two days of talks and a record number of poster presentations. Presentations from Wellington members were:

Talks: Alan Tennyson - Recent Advances in New Zealand Prion Research

Imogen Foote - Whole-genome analyses reveal genetic structure in the highly threatened Antipodean and Gibson's albatrosses

Colin Miskelly - Every last bird – Atlasing the Te Araroa Trail

Poster: Annemieke Hendriks, in conjunction with Imogen

Foote - Longevity records of New Zealand birds from

banding data. This poster won the peoples' choice award.

A full list of the abstracts can be found at the following link,

[Conference Programme with Abstracts](#)

On Monday there were field trips to Flora, Kahurangi National Park, Abel Tasman National Park, The Brook, Waimarama Sanctuary, Nelson Wastewater Treatment Plant and Taipare Bay, Marlborough Sounds.

The 2025 New Zealand Bird Conference and AGM will be held in Auckland over King's Birthday Weekend.



Sanctuary, Fiona Sutherland by conference venue

At the conference the President, Bruce McKinlay announced two prestigious awards for Wellington members. **Raewyn Empson** received a Falla Memorial Award and **Colin Miskelly** was made a Fellow of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Birds New Zealand). The citations accompanying these awards will be published in full in the Birds New Zealand magazine.



Raewyn Empson

### Robert Falla Memorial Award

Instituted in 1981. Raewyn is the 25<sup>th</sup> recipient of this award.

There are two basic requirements for this prestigious award of the Society:

- valuable contributions to the study of birds in the New Zealand region (includes New Zealand, Southwest Pacific, Southern Ocean and Antarctica) and
- sustained service to Birds New Zealand.

### Fellow of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand

A Fellow, who shall be elected by Council in its sole discretion on the unanimous resolution of all Councillors excluding any nominee and who shall be entitled to all the full rights of Ordinary Membership without the obligation to pay a subscription. They shall be persons who have rendered distinguished service to the Society or ornithology particularly in New Zealand, provided that there shall be no more than six Fellows living at any one time. Colin is the 13th Fellow of the OSNZ.



Colin Miskelly



The Five-Year Atlas project completed the accumulation of checklists on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 2024. The exciting part of the project now begins with the analysis of the vast amount of data. The Wellington branch is to be congratulated for their participation in the Atlas and the impressive 58,558 checklists covering the region (includes the Wairarapa) and data from all 105 squares. While Atlasing was not a competitive sport there were some notable personal achievements. Alan Tennyson submitted 4,623 checklists followed closely by Allan Munro with 4,526. Johannes Fischer identified 125 different species in the Wellington Region followed by Alan Tennyson with 121.

### From the Atlas Team

*If you haven't already, remember to switch your eBird app portal to 'New Zealand' rather than the Atlas portal. We know it feels sad doing it, but it is time.*

*For those who have submitted to the portal since the project ended on the 1st June 2024, no worries! Simply log in online and using the 'Checklist Tools' button, switch those checklists dated after 1 June 2024 to the New Zealand portal instead.*

***Please ensure all checklists that you wish to contribute towards the Atlas are uploaded by the end of July 2024!***

*eBird the next step.*

*So, many of you might be thinking, now what? Do we just hang up our binoculars and wait for the next Atlas? Far from it! We wish for you to see this third [Birds New Zealand Atlas](#) as a solid platform to take a big step forward in our efforts and galvanise as many passionate birders as possible to continue to support the national eBird dataset in Aotearoa New Zealand.*

*We encourage you to continue to submit your valuable birding observations on a regular basis to the New Zealand eBird portal. Remember the [Atlas Essentials](#)? Well they are still valuable to stick to, just call them 'Birding Essentials'!*

*Happy birding!*

### Cryptic Birds – Taupo Swamp, Shane Cotter

Due to the large size of Taupo Swamp, Plimmerton, it was surveyed on behalf of Greater Wellington Regional Council for spotless crane and fernbird over five days between 23 October and 1 December 2023. Eighteen spotless crane (14 heard and four seen), nine fernbird (eight seen and one heard), along with one Australasian bittern recorded booming, were located when it was surveyed. This is the first-time fernbird have been recorded at Taupo Swamp. The numbers of spotless crane and fernbird indicate a healthy population of both species. This very positive result is most likely a direct result of restoration and predator trapping efforts by local community conservation groups, national conservation organisations, local authorities and landowners.

The survey for spotless crane and fernbird involved playing a recording of their calls approximately every 50-75 metres around the wetland and listening and looking for them to respond. Due to its size, three acoustic recording devices (ARD) were installed at Taupo Swamp from 23 October through to 20 November 2023 to record any male bittern booming. A bird was recorded booming both before dawn and after sunset for several days from 23 October and again for several days in mid-November on the ARD installed at the southern end of main swamp. This is the first record of bittern at this location for many years.

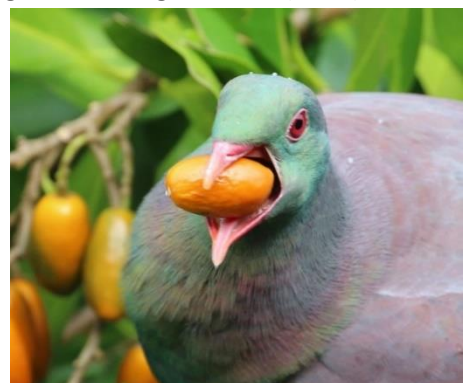
## Karaka Poisoning, little spotted kiwi, Kapiti Island

The summer of 23/24 has been notable for the low rainfall and a drought which affected the food supply for some forest birds. A little spotted kiwi was found on Kapiti Island with marked nervous signs including paralysis and transferred to the Wildbase Veterinary Hospital at Massey University. The kiwi was diagnosed with karaka berry poisoning. After treatment she improved to regain her mobility and feeding herself. After her stay at Wildbase she stayed at Nga Manu Nature Reserve in a pre-release pen. On 8<sup>th</sup> of May the kiwi was released back on Kapiti. Karaka berries are well-known to be poisonous to many species including humans. Suspect poisoning in kiwi has previously been reported in brown kiwi (Shaw & Billing 2006). Maori used karaka berries as a food source and were aware of their poisonous nature if untreated. The poison (karakin) was inactivated by washing and cooking. Connor (1951) reported that karaka “has a pronounced effect on man and dogs, but cattle and pigs are comparatively immune”. Ripe karaka berries are a favourite food of kereru which are the only forest bird large enough to be capable of swallowing whole berries.

Pictures: left, Lee Barry, DOC ranger returning little spotted kiwi to Kapiti (photo



Dallas Bishop), right, kereru eating karaka berry on Kapiti Island



Conner, HE. (1977) The Poisonous Plants in New Zealand, New Zealand Government Printer, revised edition.

**Karaka (*Monocarps laevigatus*) toxicosis in North Island brown kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*)** [Stephanie D Shaw<sup>1</sup>](#), [Tony Billing](#)

Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice Volume 9, Issue 3, September 2006, Pages 545-549.

[10.1016/j.cvex.2006.05.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cvex.2006.05.014) From 2001 to 2004, Westshore Wildlife Reserve (Napier) observed five incidences of a vestibular syndrome in North Island brown kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*). These were suspected to be the result of ingesting the karaka berry (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*), which contains a neurotoxin (karakin).

**Wildbase** <https://www.facebook.com/masseywildbase/>

*We have been treating a real trooper of a little spotted kiwi from Kapiti Island with karaka berry toxicity. She's improved from being completely paralysed to standing by herself and sometimes feeding for herself. You can see in this video she's still a little spacey, but we have great hopes for a full recovery. Take home message: don't eat the karaka!* [dtrnspooeS ma1179M76m41tc4gi3151mc3i1i780095i :ya8i Ma1A t9a](#) ·

*Hooray, hooray! Our little spotted kiwi with karaka toxicity has been released back on to Kapiti Island. She was doing really well in hospital so we sent her down to our friends at Ngā Manu Nature Reserve who tried her in a pre-release pen. Here she proved her readiness for release by scaling a 4 foot wall. She came back to us for a final check and then was released back onto Kapiti by the DOC island staff.*

*The DOC rangers report: We've just released your ex-patient at Waiorua on Kapiti Island, at the site where she was found. She was alert and looked in excellent condition. The 5-star artificial burrow prepared for her (aka cardboard box) wasn't to her liking - she stuck out her beak, probed the ground outside the entrance, maybe realized she was home and did a runner! But not far - we left her in a quiet thicket just beside her box to wait out the day.*

## Forest & Bird - Places for Penguins

**May 10<sup>th</sup>.** The following is a post from the Places for Penguins Facebook page.

noSdoerpsta4505m6gP05 6415 0tuMgh88M3h49 6a8a512yia9ilg:01h ·

*You may have seen our recent interviews with RNZ, The Post, and Stuff where we shared that since our post on Tuesday, another two kororā were found dead from a now confirmed dog attack at Evans Bay Marina. These birds were microchipped so we know that they were a pair who successfully raised two chicks last season. This totals 4 kororā dead in 3 weeks from confirmed dog attacks around our coast. While the news is absolutely heartbreaking and leaves us all at a bit of a loss for words, we thought we'd provide a few actions you can take if you're also feeling a bit hopeless. Thanks as always to our partners at Wellington Zoo The Nest/Te Kōhanga for doing these necropsies and providing us with the invaluable information that is needed to enact change*

*Speak up - if you're a dog owner or not, we all have a social responsibility for the protection of our wildlife. If you see someone not keeping their dog on a lead or under control in areas where there may be penguins living, let them know the risk they pose to kororā and encourage them to take responsibility.*

*Change your walking habits - kororā are most often active on land at dusk and dawn, so never let your dog off lead on the beach during these times. Better yet, try to avoid walking your dog on the beach during these times altogether; it lessens the chance of any interactions and removes the risk of attack completely!*

*Take note of coastal signage - there's a lot of inconsistent signage along the coast and it can get a bit confusing on where you can and can't walk your dog. If you think your local beach could do with more signage or a clearer message then write to Wellington City Council and tell them - the less infringements of bylaws, the safer the kororā.*

*Write to council/local MP - we believe there should be more fenced off protected areas for kororā and that the signage around the coast should be more obvious and clearer. If you agree then consider writing to WCC or your local MP and telling them. Our at risk manu can't speak up for themselves so we need to be the voice for their protection.*

*Links to articles:*

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/.../little-penguins-fatally...>

<https://www.thepost.co.nz/.../dog-owners-warned-after...>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/.../dogs-kill-four-little-blue..>

**May 30<sup>th</sup>, another 3 penguin deaths have been reported, a total of 7 in two months.**

Regional Representative, Annemieke Hamilton,

Regional Recorder: Peter Hodge [peter.hodge@gmail.com](mailto:peter.hodge@gmail.com)

Matiu / Somes Island survey, Shane Cotter, [heather.shane@xtra.co.nz](mailto:heather.shane@xtra.co.nz)

Newsletter, Geoff de Lisle, [osnzwelly@gmail.com](mailto:osnzwelly@gmail.com)

## Bird Snippets

### Black-fronted Terns, Te Raekaihau Pt, Wellington

**Michael Szabo** Apr 01, 2024

Sally Eyre was there this afternoon around high tide and got this shot of a flock of 17 Black-fronted Terns with 1 White-fronted among them. BirdingNZ.net



### Dabchick, Okupe Lagoon, Kapiti Island

There have been two eBird checklists of sightings of a single dabchick on Okupe lagoon, on the northern end of Kapiti Island. These are the first sightings of dabchick on Kapiti Island listed in eBird.

Nikolas Haass, 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr. 2024. Photograph included with checklist.

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S168713279>

Charlotte Reinholdt, 16<sup>th</sup> Apr. 2024

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S168838004>



### Black-browed Albatross grounded in Wellington

**Michael Szabo** » Sun Apr 28, 2024

This juvenile Black-browed Albatross was found grounded in Wellington last week. A Facebook post Wellington Zoo reported that it was very weak when it was brought in for their vets to treat. They found it had swallowed plastic items that were stuck in its stomach and removed them. Hopefully the bird recovers and can be released back into the wild. BirdingNZ.net

### North Island Brown Kiwi, Broadmeadows, Wellington - RNZ

**Michael Szabo** » Thu May 02, 2024

Footage has been posted today of a North Island Brown Kiwi videoed in a garden in the Wellington suburb of Broadmeadows:

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/515...NAbPFDM0nD>

### Spotless crane & pateke, Rangatira, Kapiti Island

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2024. Trail camera footage of spotless crane and brown teal at Rangatira. While they are resident in the wetland at Rangatira they are very rarely seen by day visitors to the island.

### Kereru, Mana Island

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, A pair of kereru were present by the wetland loop. While single kereru have been observed on multiple occasions on Mana it is rare for more than one bird. eBird records show 4 birds observed in February 2020 (Catherine Mitchell) and 6 birds were recorded in May 2016 (Grant Timlin). Breeding of kereru has not been recorded on Mana.

Update: 22 June - pair observed feeding on kowhai.

### Antarctic Fulmar beach-wrecks, Kapiti Coast

**Michael Szabo** » Sun May 26, 2024

Felicity Underhill reports via Facebook finding this Antarctic Fulmar beach-wrecked 'on a Kapiti Coast beach' today before it was taken into care. BirdingNZ.net

**Michael Szabo** » Sun May 26, 2024

Peter Shearer reports today via iNaturalist that he found a dead Antarctic/Southern Fulmar at Makara beach today but adds that someone else had found one dead in the same vicinity '2 weeks ago'. His report includes 3 photos of the dead bird he found: BirdingNZ.net

<https://inaturalist.nz/observations/218261903>

Mon Jun 03, 2024

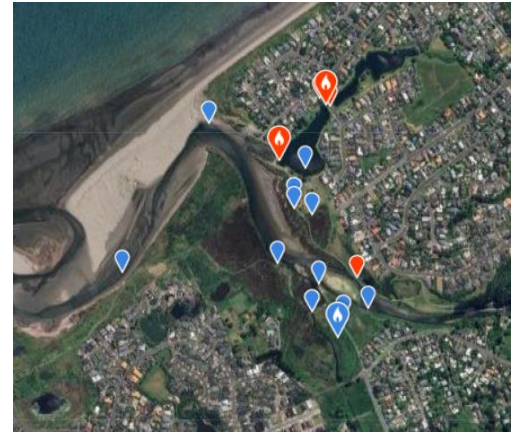


Another beach wrecked bird found today on the Kapiti coast, reported via Facebook by Chad Heberley. BirdingNZ.net  
Recent DNA-based studies have revealed some new insights into the taxonomy of fairy/fulmar prions

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2022/09/28/then-there-were-eight-te-papa-research-reveals-yet-another-species-of-prion/>  
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0275102>

## White heron / kotuku - Waikanae

A white heron / kotuku has been present in the Waikanae River / Waimanu Lagoon since the 14<sup>th</sup> of April (eBird, see map). A second white heron was briefly present in May. These birds have received a considerable amount of publicity. A number of people have expressed concern that the white heron was being harassed by over-zealous photographers. The following is a post by Janine Clement on the Waikanae Caregroup Facebook page, 11<sup>th</sup> June.



*The message just isn't getting through to photographers in regards to the Kōtuku...It's been like Piccadilly Circus today & so much stress is being put on the Bird, it moved off, they followed & it then flew onto our Garage Roof & they were still clicking away! I asked them to give the Bird a break & basically got told to F\*\*k off! I said this is not normal behaviour for this Bird it doesn't want to be on my roof & it's never flown on my roof before! Crazy behaviour putting your need for a photo before the welfare of the Kōtuku....everyone thinks this bird is so chilled but it can only handle so much of people being too close, the best thing it could do is fly off & find a quieter spot where there is less daily intrusion! [etospSordnfm0:2uath0c1 1 g3Mnuu12t5566hl59 uieP9715lt8a Ja31](#)*

BirdsNZ has updated the **Code of Conduct for the Photography of Birds**: [birdsNZ.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Code-of-Conduct-for-Photography-of-Birds-Guidelines.pdf](https://birdsNZ.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Code-of-Conduct-for-Photography-of-Birds-Guidelines.pdf)

1. Security and welfare of birds:
2. Minimise stress to birds:
3. Attracting birds to a specific site:
4. Use of bird photography on social media
5. Use of drone aircraft for photography
6. Permission to enter land
7. Respect the interests of others when observing and photographing birds:

On the 18<sup>th</sup> April Shane Cotter reported a white heron on the Hutt River estuary, near Waione St, Petone. The bird was feeding on the estuary at half tide and the first Shane had seen for some years.

<https://eBird.org/atlasnz/checklist/S169120526>

The photographs (Dallas Bishop) were taken on 05 June of a white heron preening on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony of an apartment building in Picton. There are multiple eBird records from 2024 of a white heron in Picton.





Instructions for 2024- <https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/>

### 2023 Garden Bird Survey Results

These are summarised on the website, <https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/results/report-2023/>

*“Key signals for introduced species that also act as environmental indicators:*

*Myna counts continue to show a trend of little to no change nationally and shallow increases in four regions over 10 years. There is some evidence that the rapid increase in their counts in Wellington continues in both the long and short term (126% and 122%, respectively) along with a moderate increase in the short term in Manawatū-Whanganui (30%).*

Note: The results for myna are listed as percentages and not numerical counts. The Birds New Zealand Atlas will provide more information on the changes in myna populations in the North Island.

## King’s Birthday Honours 2024: Dr Murray Williams made Officer of New Zealand Order of Merit

Congratulations to Murray on the award of Officer of New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to science and conservation. Murray is a Wellington member of Birds New Zealand who was recognised for his contribution to ornithology by being made a Fellow of the OSNZ (Birds New Zealand) in 2021 ([https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Birds-NZ-Magazine\\_September-2021\\_web.pdf](https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Birds-NZ-Magazine_September-2021_web.pdf)).



### The Capital Kiwi Project is at Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari

6<sup>th</sup> of June, Capital Kiwi Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/capitalkiwi/> .

Kiwi: we’ve got your back. The 75 kiwi released on Wellington’s hills from March-May came via partnership with successful breeding programmes in fenced sanctuaries: Save the Kiwi’s Kōhanga Kiwi at [Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari](#), and Taranaki Kōhnaga Kiwi at [Rotokare](#)

[Scenic Reserve Trust](#). The export of birds reduces carrying capacity pressures in the sanctuaries, and enables wild kiwi populations to be grown in unfenced areas where suitable pest control is in place (such as CK)

Moving the manu involves a kiwi ‘catching season’. This is a months-long logistics exercise. Kiwi are located in the bush by teams of specialist trackers and dogs, then wrangled into smaller enclosures. They’re then rounded up, given a physical, and transported to release sites. It’s collaborative effort involving iwi, Save the Kiwi, sanctuaries, recipient projects, landowners, communities and volunteers.

Photographer Josh Forrest was at Maungatautari to document the first week of catching in March. Wellington’s reps on the catching crew were Jeff and Rawiri (CK), and Kirihi, Vyona and Waiapu (rangatahi from local Taranaki Whānui conservation group, [The Hem of Remutaka](#)).

Iwi catchers attended a special wānanga hosted by Ngāti Korokī Kahukura. Rawiri:

“The goal of the wānanga was to train more Māori in kiwi-accredited handling and to discuss and develop what looking after kiwinui – and being in the taiao – mean to us as Māori.” “Vyona was able to get out with the dog catching team, while everyone participated in the muster to send manu to Te Whanganui a Tara.”

Joshua Forrest

May 1.

[dospnteoSrtf5501f77mM5h1lu20ht14hlt000la1m0hc451t ya9ma72c91](#) ·

We're massively proud to share arguably the most significant milestone in the project's eight years. Our first two chicks – the New York Times' front-page stars from December – have made fighting weight. Both kiwi have reached 1.2kg. This is the critical weight at which a kiwi is considered "stoat proof". They have now had their chick transmitters removed and are free to live their best wild lives = they are the project's first homegrown wild kiwi.

## Stoat sighting on the Miramar Peninsula

News release, 9<sup>th</sup> May



**PREDATOR FREE  
WELLINGTON**

Miramar Peninsula's biosecurity systems are being put to the test with a male stoat sighted on the peninsula. "The stoat has been detected on Predator Free Wellington's monitoring cameras and was also sighted by residents. James Willcocks, Project Director said the reality of our project is that reinvasion is a constant threat and this stoat detection is proof that our biosecurity systems are working exactly as planned. "The monitoring cameras provide us with good intelligence. We are able to determine from the photos that it is a male stoat, which is good news, as it means we are dealing with a solitary animal

which means there's no risk of breeding," said James. "The skill set to catch a solitary animal is very different to general pest suppression. A lot of it comes down to mindset and strategy. "As a world-first multi-species elimination project, we are wanting to ensure we are learning every step of the way and building approaches that can be replicated. Our response needs to be clever, it also needs to be cost-efficient." said James. "A big part of this efficiency is our community approach, we are investing in behaviour change and building capability at a community level. "This last week we enlisted additional help from John Bissell, Backblocks Environmental Management Ltd, his specialty is finding and removing one predator in a large landscape. John provided on the ground training to both Predator Free Wellington's field staff and Predator Free Miramar volunteers and explained how catching a solitary animal is more of a hunt than an exact science. Predator Free Miramar Lead Dan Henry, said whilst his team would prefer not to have a stoat on the peninsula, this is an exciting challenge for the volunteers. It's what they are trained to do and we have a good picture of the stoat's movement and can respond accordingly. "Our goal is to outwit this animal and not to panic," said Dan.

"The volunteers will be thinking about the terrain and how the stoat is moving around the peninsula, and we will be moving the right traps into the right place to catch it. We will also be using cameras to our advantage," said Dan.

Predator Free Wellington is asking for the community to report any sightings to Predator Free Wellington via their 0800 NO RATS hotline.

<https://www.pfw.org.nz/resources/news/stoat-sighting-on-the-miramar-peninsula/>

Update: June 1, 2024. The stoat has still not been caught. First seen, December 15<sup>th</sup>, last seen April 12<sup>th</sup>.

[https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/350287997/hunting-stoat?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1ZYy2DNbJT9PI4GkiSPWkVjy0\\_cP4j2UeyHSj9-kUuwnEH-xeCTTINTEM\\_aem\\_ZmFrZWR1bW15MTZieXRlcw](https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/350287997/hunting-stoat?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1ZYy2DNbJT9PI4GkiSPWkVjy0_cP4j2UeyHSj9-kUuwnEH-xeCTTINTEM_aem_ZmFrZWR1bW15MTZieXRlcw)