

# TŌREA PANGO



**NELSON BRANCH BIRDS NZ.**

**NEWSLETTER ISSUE 14.**

**July/Aug 2024.**

Another full newsletter, although I have a feeling that someone has sent me something for inclusion that I've missed? -but having scoured all relevant folders I can't find anything. Apologies if I have and let me know for future inclusion. It's pretty much Spring in the Aniseed today, although there are still plenty of big frosts. Almost godwit and shining cuckoo time!

## LAST MEETINGS

**July 1<sup>st</sup>**

- 15 people attended the July meeting in person and 5 via Zoom
- Not deterred by his recent rather unsuccessful Alaskan adventure Mark Ayre showed slides of a previous trip
- David Melville talked about the Australasian harrier roosting site at Pearl Creek and gave an overview of communal roosting in harriers in general. (see below)

**August 5<sup>th</sup>**

- 24 people attended in person and 5 via zoom at a new venue -the Headingly Centre.
- The bulk of the meeting was taken up with a workshop on 'feathers'
- Bob Jones showed some amazing shots of a karearea predated a kereru.

## LATEST SIGHTINGS

### Local

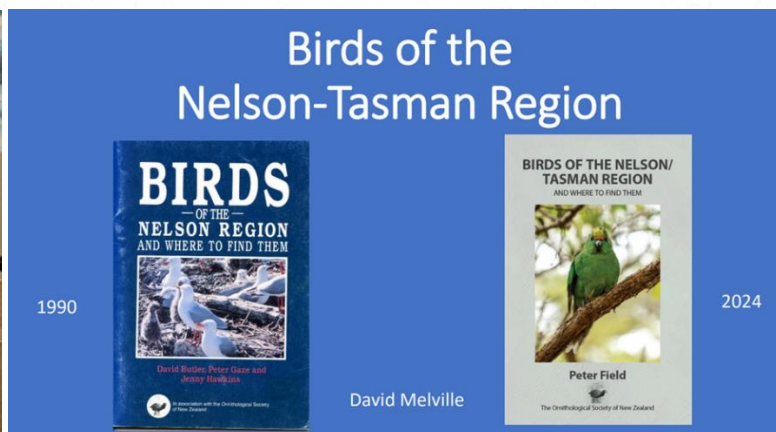
- David Melville reported 2 little owl at the Headingly centre as he left our August meeting!

### National

- Phil Hammond reported a semi-palmated plover at Big Sand Island on Sat Jun 22.
- Grey plover - Big Sand Island June 29th
- 5! Marsh Sandpipers have been seen at Southern Marsh, Napier. Reported 17th June

## OSNZ FOREST AND BIRD COMBINED MEETING AND A HISTORIC BOOK LAUNCH- Peter Gaze

On 8th May we had a combined meeting with Forest & Bird to launch the new guide to birdlife in the Nelson/Tasman region which was written by Peter Field. The publication was made possible by a grant from the society's national office and generous sponsorship from the local branch of Forest and Bird.



This is a huge advance on the earlier version written 35 years ago. The highlight of the evening was a presentation by David Melville which drew on information in this new publication to tell how the status of many species had changed so much over that period. For example, one species was the welcome swallow. David tracked its increase over 50 years by reviewing the information in the four atlases of bird distribution. The title of a published short note in our journal being a reminder of the fun we can have in our study of birds.

1969-1974

1975-1979

1999-2004

2019-2024

**New Zealand Bird Atlas**

**WELCOME SWALLOW AT FAREWELL SPIT**  
 A Welcome Swallow (*Hirundo neoxena*), the fourth recorded occurrence in New Zealand, was seen by me on 25/11/55. It was flying near and over the lake on the property of Mr S. W. Freeman, Puponga, whose farm immediately adjoins the base of Farewell Spit.

The change in fortunes for who, at least in Kahurangi, must be a testament to stoat control.

## Blue Duck

1990: It is uncertain whether the species is holding its own in the region....

2023 September – 846 adults including 335 breeding pairs in Kahurangi NP – 340% increase since 2000.

Tyronne Smith/NZBirdsOnline

## New Zealand Scaup

1990: Small populations of scaup may be found at several lakes in the region.

The importance of a wastewater treatment wetland to the changing status of New Zealand scaup (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*) in the Nelson/Tasman region  
Notornis, 2022, Vol. 69: 178-182

Gieren Pared/NZBirdsOnline

The improved distribution and abundance of scaup has been described in Notornis by four of our members. The key site for this increase has been the wastewater treatment ponds at Wakapuaka which now qualifies as a key site under the Ramsar Convention and has been fenced off to prevent any casual visits.





Whimbrel  
43 in 1993  
Now 2-3 a good number



Far Eastern Curlew  
28 in 1995  
Now hardly ever recorded

And two species which have declined drastically over these 35 years are whimbrel and curlew, due almost certainly to loss of habitat in their northern hemisphere range.

Peter's book may be purchased for \$20 at branch meetings. It was also provided free for those attending the society's conference in June.

An electronic copy is available on the society's website.

Birds of the Nelson/Tasman Region: [birdsNZ.org.nz/resources/birding-maps/](https://birdsNZ.org.nz/resources/birding-maps/)

## A MARLBOROUGH BIRDING WEEKEND 29-30 JUNE 2024- Alison Ballance

Six Birds NZ members from Nelson (Sharen Graham, Mark Ayre, Craig Martin, Rob Jones, Maria Clement and Alison Ballance) popped over to Marlborough for a weekend of birding around some of Blenheim's lakes and wetlands. They were joined by local birders Pat Crowe, Bill Cash, Mike Bell, Dan Burgin and Samantha Ray who suggested the itinerary and were excellent guides for some or all of the time. The midwinter weather was calm and sunny.

Day 1 involved a circuit of the Grovetown Lagoon, a visit to Taylor Dam, and several short jaunts at the beginning of the Wairau Lagoons track and the Kotuku Track across to the Opawa River.

Day 2 saw an early start to privately-owned Lake Pinot (a vineyard irrigation pond), then a visit to private land at southern end of Lake Elterwater, finishing with a stint at the jetty on Lake Elterwater on the side of SH1.

Grovetown Lagoon was notable for the hundreds of welcome swallows hovering and hawking at the water surface. The birding highlight for everyone was a lengthy encounter with a very relaxed marsh crake (Baillon's crake), sunning itself in the open in a patch of raupo next to the road at Taylor Dam. Well found by keen-eyed photographers Rob and Craig. For about 20 minutes we enjoyed the crake as it preened, wandered around, slid nonchalantly down a long raupo leaf, foraged and snoozed. Its green bill and long green toes were notable, as was its tiny size (half the size of a blackbird!) and dapper appearance. A delightful time with a bird described as one of New Zealand's most secretive.

We were successful at seeing black-fronted dotterels and curlew buntings at the beginning of the Wairau Lagoons walk, which was also notable for mixed flocks of more than a thousand finches - including yellowhammers, gold finches, redpolls, sparrows and chaffinches – feeding on the Salicornia flats.

The Australasian little grebes that had been previously seen at Lake Pinot were unfortunately not present, but there were plenty of scaup, 30 dabchicks (AKA New Zealand grebe) and several Australasian crested grebes.

Grebes were a bit of a feature on Lake Elterwater as well: a crested grebe, at least 9 dabchicks and – most excitingly – 5 hoary-headed grebes. Maria glimpsed another crake – possibly a spotless, which we were hoping to see, but perhaps a marsh? Hopefully one of her photos will confirm.

A side excursion on the way home out to the Wairau Bar included a sighting of 23 spoonbills.

All up we recorded 45 species. And the greatest number of individuals recorded in one checklist was 5101. Many thanks to Pat and Dan who recorded and shared the e-bird checklists. Mike quipped that he made sure he didn't do good checklists, so he was never asked to be the checklist maker.

Everyone agreed that the best bit of the trip was the company and camaraderie. We enjoyed spending time together and particularly getting to know members from a neighbouring region. The Nelson crew are encouraging the Marlborough team to head their way and be hosted and guided in return. And we're keen for a repeat visit to see if we can find the spotless crake and Australasian little grebes that eluded us on this visit.



*Left -Hoary headed grebe  
(photo Rob Jones)*



*Left -The group*

*Below left -Marsh (Baillon's)  
crake sighting at Taylor's  
dam (photo Alison Balance)*



## **CONFERENCE FIELD TRIP TO THE NELSON WASTEWATER TREATMENT PONDS -Paul Griffiths**

The field trip to the Treatment Ponds on June 3rd, 2024, was led by Paul Fisher and Scott Butcher supported by Willie Cook and Paul Griffiths. A total of about 21 members attended the trip. We started by parking at the Boulder Bank where Scott gave a briefing on the significance and history of the BB. White-fronted terns and various waders were spotted along with the rare white-winged black tern. All birds were recorded on eBird NZ portal. Next we all went into the plant office for a Health and Safety briefing by Jo, the plant manager. This was followed by the tour of the treatment ponds where the stars of the morning were scores of NZ scaup, 12 dabchicks and a marsh crake. A total of 30 species were recorded and a total of 1384 individual birds. Paul Fisher gave a further briefing on the status of the fernbirds at Wakapuaka Sandflats Reserve, but, sadly, no fernbirds were seen. *(All photos Paul Griffiths)*







# COMMUNAL ROOSTING OF HARRIERS- David Melville

At the July meeting Davis talked about communal roosting in Australasian harriers and in other species around the world. As a quick taster, here are some of the slides picked from his presentation. See also the information below on our very own Pearl Creek harrier roost.



**DISPLAY OF THE HARRIER (*Circus approximans*).**—A congregation of about one hundred harriers was observed by D. Brathwaite, Peter C. Bull and the writer on June 23, 1949, at 14.30 p.m. about half a mile east from the Tikokino-Kereru Road (Hawke's Bay). The birds were hovering at about twice the normal flying altitude of harriers over pastoral land adjoining the Gwavas State Forest. (Kazimierz Wodzicki, Wellington.)

1949 NZ bird Notes 3: 174

Malcolm Pullman/AZBirdsOnline

**World record count of roosting harriers *Circus* in Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar, Gujarat, north-west India**

*Forktail* 14: 70-71  
R. CLARKE, V. PRAKASH, W. S. CLARK, N. RAMESH AND D. SCOTT

'The total of harriers counted was slightly in excess of 2,500. Given that we did not have the manpower to cover the fourth side, and the fact that some birds had entered the grassland before we began counting, it seems reasonable to conclude that more than 3,000 birds attended the roost. The great majority were Montagu's Harriers *C. pygargus*, but perhaps 15-25% were Pallid Harriers *C. macrourus* and a few were Eurasian Marsh Harriers *C. aeruginosus*'.

~1% of global population of Montagu's Harrier

16 December 1997

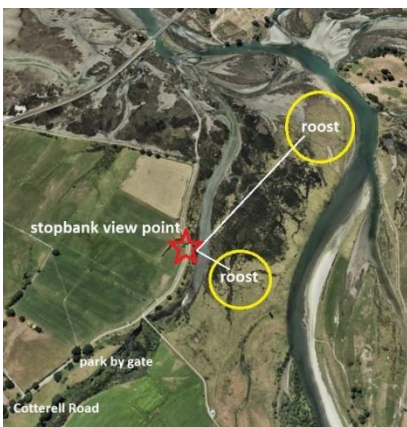
'In the non-breeding season harriers often form communal roosts which can contain several hundred birds'.

New Zealand Birds Online  
The digital recordbook of New Zealand birds

...they usually choose a patch of swampy ground, covered with rushes or cutty grass; though an area of long grass or short scrub will serve the purpose equally well....sitting on the ground, the exact spot where they sit being clearly indicated by their droppings and the quantity of white down which they shed...They continue to use such roost until August.... (read on Oliver 1953)



## PEARL CREEK HARRIER ROOST



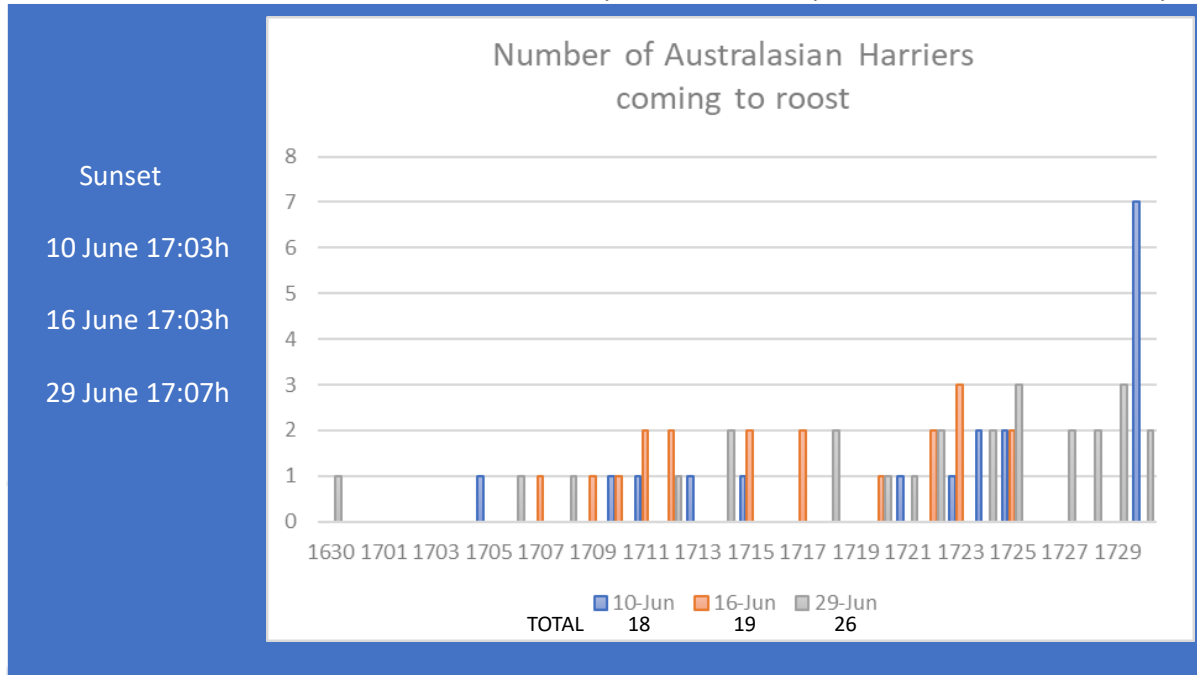
**HOW TO GET THERE:** Drive to the end of Cotterell Road and park by the barrier (do not block road!). Walk about 500m along stopbank to area just past a large ngaio tree with a maimai at the foot of the stopbank (red star below). This gives a good view over both main roosting areas.



**TIMING:** birds start to arrive shortly after sunset [check time: <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/new-zealand/nelson>] – currently I suggest get there at 17:00h. By about 17:30h it is too dark to see birds – so you only need about half an hour – and a pair of binoculars!

**BIRD BEHAVIOUR:** Harriers usually fly in low and glide down before dropping into the tall fescue grass. Birds are usually singletons, but I have seen two arrive together. You need to keep scanning the whole area to catch birds before they drop into the vegetation. A duck hunter I met said that he had seen a group of birds wheeling around in a strong wind at dusk – I have only been there in calm conditions.

**RECORDS:** Please make a note of start and end of your observation period. Record the time that you see each bird.



Please send records to: [david.melville@xtra.co.nz](mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz)

**WE EXPECT THAT THE BIRDS WILL MOVE AWAY FROM THE ROOST IN AUGUST SO PLEASE GET OUT THERE NOW WHILE THERE ARE STILL BIRDS PRESENT!**

## A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

Here is the link <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/a-new-constitution-for-the-ornithological-society-of-new-zealand/> Click and read if you are so inclined.

**And some other articles worth a read.**

- BNZRF 2023: Black-billed gulls – Summary article (Claudia Mischler): [birdsnnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2023-BNZRF-Black-billed-gulls-Summary-article-2407.pdf](https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2023-BNZRF-Black-billed-gulls-Summary-article-2407.pdf)
- Conference experience by Fledgling Fund recipient (Jo Chambon): [birdsnnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2407-Fledgling-Fund-Article-Johannes-Chambon.pdf](https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2407-Fledgling-Fund-Article-Johannes-Chambon.pdf)
- Conference experience by Fledgling Fund recipient (Oscar Thomas): [birdsnnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2407-Fledgling-Fund-Article-Oscar-Thomas.pdf](https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2407-Fledgling-Fund-Article-Oscar-Thomas.pdf)

## NEST RECORD SCHEME Serge Crottaz

Now that the New Zealand Atlas is finished you could spend some of your spare time and involved yourself in the Nest Record Scheme. The object of the scheme is to provide abundant and comprehensive data on length, time and



peak of breeding seasons, clutch size, number of clutches, incubation and fledgling periods, nest sites and materials used in nest building.

Last nesting season we greatly enjoyed observing a very busy female blackbird working hard to find food for her nestling who resided in a small bush in our garden. She went back and forth many times during the day with her beak full of worms and other insects.



Taken on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September



Taken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November using a small mirror to see inside the nest.

As rather amateur birders we found it was fun and rewarding to spend some time watching the hard work of these small birds and watch the young fledging during a gusty southerly blow at the end of November.

We spent some time in Switzerland visiting our daughter and as it was spring there, we went birding by the Lake Geneva.



Eurasian Coot, taken on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024. A few days later the nest was submerged as the lake had risen and another nest was established nearby.

If you feel like to be involved in nest recording, there is a page on the Bird New Zealand WWW site that explain how to participate in this scheme.

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/schemes/nest-record-scheme>

Also you are welcome to contact me if you have any questions regarding this project.

[serge.crottaz@gmail.com](mailto:serge.crottaz@gmail.com)

## YOUTH CAMP



Photo of a previous camp (Birds NZ) The next Birds NZ Youth Camp is planned from **28 September to 4 October 2024 in Nelson/Tasman**. Read details [here](#) The camp is a fantastic opportunity for young people to develop basic birding skills and get a hands-on experience with birds! If you are a student age 14-18 and keen to join the camp, just get in touch with the organizers at [birds.nelson@birdsnz.org.nz](mailto:birds.nelson@birdsnz.org.nz). The registration form is available for download [here](#). Read more about Youth Camps [here](#).



## NELSON/TASMAN BIRDS NEW ZEALAND TIMETABLE OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES 2024-2025

This is a provisional program forward into 2025. Yellow highlight means to be confirmed or finalised. Looks pretty exciting! There are also opportunities here for people to take leadership roles. Please contact Mark if you are interested.

<b>2024</b>			
<b>August</b>			
23-24		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
25-26		Cannon netting – Place to be decided	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
<b>September</b>			
2	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting – Paul Fisher, Fernbirds	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
7	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip - Mark Ayre	Meet 1100h Motueka Golf Course
20-21		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
23-24		Cannon netting – place to be decided	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
28-4 October		Youth Camp – Puponga/Magarakau	Contact Mark Ayre <a href="mailto:birds.nelson@birds.nz.org.nz">birds.nelson@birds.nz.org.nz</a>
30	Monday	Motueka Library – godwit exhibition [for 4 weeks]	Kathryn Richards, Alison Ballance, David Melville
T.B.C.		Godwit talk Motueka Library	David Melville
<b>October</b>			
5	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip – <b>Welcome to the godwits</b> - Sharen Graham	Meet 1100h Motueka Golf Course
6-9		Cannon netting – Place to be decided	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
7	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting – David Melville How to count waders	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
10	Thursday	Bell Island – counting waders – David Melville	Meet Greenacres Golf Course entrance 1330h
18-19		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
22-23		Cannon netting – Place to be decided	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
T.B.C.		Boulderbank Red-billed Gull drone survey	Peter Gaze/David Melville
<b>November</b>			
2	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip – Sharen Graham	Meet 1000h Motueka Golf Course
3	Sunday	Visit by Birds NZ Marlborough	Contact Sharen Graham <a href="mailto:grajamsharen@gmail.com">grajamsharen@gmail.com</a>
4	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting –	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
15-17	Friday	Spring wader count	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
15-17		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
29-30		Cannon netting – Place to be decided	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
T.B.C.		Royal Spoonbill breeding survey	



<b>December</b>			
2	Monday	BirdsNZ Christmas BBQ	Dovedale 1800h
1-7		Cannon netting – place to be decided	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
18	Wednesday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1100h Motueka Golf Course
20-21		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
T.B.C.		Royal Spoonbill breeding survey	
T.B.C.		Caspian Tern chick banding	Contact <a href="mailto:david.melville@xtra.co.nz">david.melville@xtra.co.nz</a>
<b>2025</b>			
<b>January</b>			
		NO BirdsNZ monthly meeting	
4	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1200h Motueka Golf Course
17-18		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
<b>February</b>			
1	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1100h Motueka Golf Course
10	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
14-16	Friday	Summer wader count	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
14-16		Gannet Survey 2024-25	Contact <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
<b>March</b>			
1	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1030h Motueka Golf Course
3	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting– AGM	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
28-29		Gannet Survey 2024-25	<a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
<b>April</b>			
7	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
19	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1200h Motueka Golf Course
<b>May</b>			
5	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
31	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1300h Motueka Golf Course
31	Saturday	BirdsNZ Annual Conference Auckland	
<b>June</b>			
1	Sunday	BirdsNZ Annual Conference Auckland	
2	Monday	BirdsNZ Annual Conference Auckland	
9	Monday	BirdsNZ monthly meeting	Headingly Centre, Richmond 1915h
14	Saturday	Motueka Sandspit trip	Meet 1030h Motueka Golf Course
27	Friday	Winter wader count	Contact Rob Schuckard: <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
28	Saturday	Winter wader count	Contact Rob Schuckard: <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>
29	Sunday	Winter wader count	Contact Rob Schuckard: <a href="mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz">rschckrd@xtra.co.nz</a>



## NOTES

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly meetings are held at the Headingly Centre, Richmond starting at 19:15h and ending at 21:00h. Details of speakers etc. will be circulated in advance.

Monthly meetings are usually held on the first Monday of each month (unless a public holiday gets in the way).

### FIELD TRIPS

Regular field trips are organised to **Motueka Sandspit** – these are an ideal opportunity to meet likeminded people, hone your birding skills and get some exercise! The trips are scheduled for Saturdays to enable more people to participate, with high tide around mid-day. Meet at the car park at the north end of Motueka Quay Road, by the golf course. You may get wet feet. All welcome.

The region is starting a new project to examine eye colour of Australasian Gannets at the **Farewell Spit** colony in relation to possible exposure to High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza [HPAI] - in Europe some Atlantic Gannets exposed to HPAI have dark eyes. The project will run between August 2024 and March 2025. Trips will be overnight, staying at the old Lighthouse Keeper's house, with field work in the afternoon and following morning – examining birds, band reading and photographing individual birds. Spaces are limited. If you would like to participate, please email Rob: [rschckrd@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz)

### WADER COUNT

Wader counts are organised three times a year: February, June/July, November. If you would like to participate, please email Rob: [rschckrd@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rschckrd@xtra.co.nz)

### ROYAL SPOONBILL CENSUS

If you would like to participate, please email Jane Meiforth: [jj.meiforth@posteo.de](mailto:jj.meiforth@posteo.de)

### WADER CATCHING and BANDING

The branch periodically arranges catching and banding of waders. The schedule includes many possible catch dates, but this is to allow for cancellation due to bad weather, sites being inaccessible.

## DOG CONTROL (TDC)

Below is the letter many of you have probably already received from the TDC. I'm an avid dog lover but there are few things that make me rant more than an owner watching their dog chase birds through a protected area and who when approached tells me 'He's only having fun, he never hurts them'. TDC cannot please everyone but personally I think these proposals look reasonable. Members with familiarity of specific locations may wish to add their voices and further inform outcomes. Anyway, the letter and links for submission are copied below.

'Kia ora

Tasman District Council is currently reviewing the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw. We recognise the importance of responsible dog ownership in ensuring public safety, protecting wildlife, and reducing nuisances caused by dogs in public places. It is also essential that we provide ample open space for dogs and their owners to enjoy.

The dog control policy is a legal requirement, and the bylaw enables our dog rangers to enforce various provisions of the Dog Control Act. Historically, these two documents have been separate but have covered much of the same content. To avoid duplication and ensure information is consistent, we propose combining the policy and bylaw into one comprehensive document, serving as a one-stop shop for all your dog regulation needs.

Clear guidelines and regulations are essential to address issues such as dogs being off-leash in inappropriate areas, failure to clean up after dogs, excessive barking, and incidents of dog aggression. The policy also addresses operational matters such as setting registration fees and maintaining a register of dogs in the district.

Several zones in the current Dog Control Bylaw are proposed to change. With early engagement feedback from a range of stakeholders as our guide, the draft has prioritised areas that are sensitive for wildlife while opening up other spaces for controlled exercise.



As a registered dog owner, we are keen to hear your perspective on what is proposed. We invite you to participate in the consultation process by reviewing the draft Dog Control Policy and Bylaw, available at [Dog Control Policy and Bylaw | Shape Tasman](#).

The best way to provide your feedback is through our online submission form available on the Shape Tasman page. You can also provide your feedback through email to [haveyoursay@tasman.govt.nz](mailto:haveyoursay@tasman.govt.nz), or in writing by dropping it off at one of our service centres. Submissions close on 8 September 2024.

Physical copies of the Statement of Proposal (including the Draft Bylaw) and the Summary of Information will be made available at all service centres and libraries from 7 August 2024.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your active involvement in shaping the future of our dog control policy and bylaw.

Ngā mihi, Animal Control Team'

## SPOONBILL CENSUS REPORT -Jane Meiforth

Below is the final version of the spoonbill winter census in the Nelson Tasman Region.

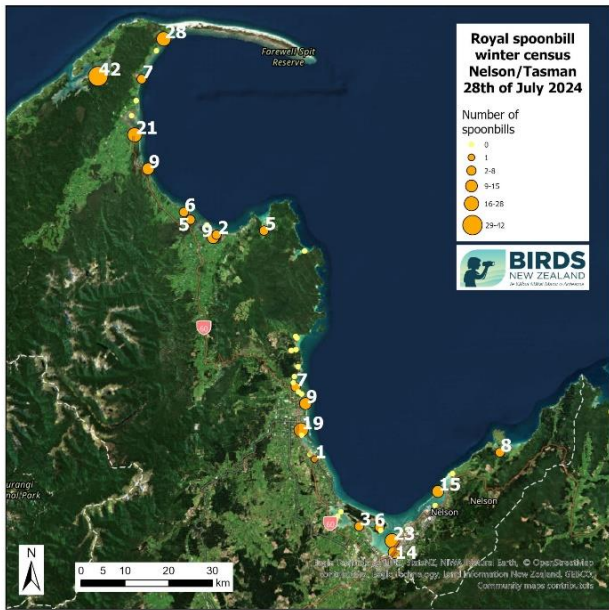
The final numbers for our region add up to 239 total, thereby 134 for the Golden Bay area and 109 for Nelson/Richmond.

And a big thank you to all the observers and the active spoonbill committee members: David Melville, Jenny Edwards and Patsy Garrett who did a fantastic job coordinating the Golden Bay group. Also, Peter Gaze who helped with his knowledge and data from the previous counts.

### Winter Spoonbill Census Nelson Tasman Area on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2024

General Location	Number of birds	observers	Latitude	Longitude
Delaware Bay / Coast near Starlight Beach Retreat	8	Tom Young, Paul Fisher, Alison Balance	-41.171563	173.426193
Nelson Haven	0	Serge Crottaz	-41.253638	173.293359
Nelson Haven / Boulder bank	15	Maggie Atkinson	-41.232000	173.299000
Wakapuaka settling / oxidation ponds	0	Andrew Fidler	-41.204328	173.328789
Monaco / Pig island	23	Kathryn Richards	-41.308000	173.205000
Orphanage Stream 13 Elms Street	14	Kathryn Richards	-41.326000	173.209000
Small Sandbank Bell Island	6	Jane Meiforth, William Cook, Jenny Edwards	-41.287253	173.178705
Shell bank Bell Island	0	Jane Meiforth, William Cook	-41.291926	173.181421
Waimea Inlet / River mouth opposite Greenslade Park	3	Jane Meiforth, William Cook	-41.285526	173.137082
Waimea Inlet / Grossi Point	0	Gillian Pollock, William Cook	-41.263278	173.100154
Waimea Inlet / Hoddy Island	0	Gillian Pollock, William Cook	-41.269981	173.093199
Kaiteriteri estuary	0	Sandy Toy	-41.039100	173.011500
Tapu Bay	0	Sandy Toy	-41.054400	173.004400
Riwaka river mouth	0	Sandy Toy	-41.064100	173.002300
Riwaka estuary	7	Sandy Toy	-41.070400	173.007000
Riwaka marsh	0	Robin Toy, Martin Howard	-41.078000	173.013000
Motueka River mouth	0	Robin Toy, Martin Howard	-41.081500	173.019200
Okiwi bay	0	Malcolm Ives	-41.108654	173.654617
Otuwhero Estuary / River mouth	0	D Hughes, J Simes	-41.013719	172.997850
Otuwhero Sandspit	0	D Hughes, J Simes	-41.012592	173.007670
Motueka / Port Motueka	19	Matt Moss, Christine Grove, Tim Rowe	-41.137227	173.017874
Motueka / Staples Street North	9	Matt Moss, Christine Grove, Tim Rowe	-41.096345	173.027023
Motueka / Johnstone Loop	1	Matt Moss	-41.181951	173.045700
Motueka / Moutere Inlet	0	Matt Moss, Christine Grove, Tim Rowe	-41.145281	173.019010
Motueka / Easton Lagoon	0	Matt Moss, Christine Grove, Tim Rowe	-41.174342	173.035999

Marahau Estuary	0	D Hughes, J Simes	-40.992279	173.007130
Marahau Estuary	0	D Hughes, J Simes	-40.994531	173.009511
Abel Tasman- Awaroa Bay	0	Mike Crawford	-40.859638	173.025067
Onahau	6	Patsy Garrett	-40.799232	172.777184
Puponga	28	Andrew Goldsworthy	-40.529805	172.735924
Taupata Pt	0	Sam Moynan	-40.548410	172.720788
Motupipi	9	Anna Reynolds	-40.838843	172.837839
Motupipi	2	Anna Reynolds	-40.834409	172.844665
Rototai coast	0	Anna Reynolds	-40.819290	172.824735
Wainui inlet	5	Cathy Mountier	-40.828191	172.941980
Waitapu estuary	5	Cynthia McConville	-40.811000	172.791000
Collingwood estuary	21	Bill Brooker	-40.679092	172.676503
Tomatea Point, Pakawau	7	Henry Dixon	-40.592139	172.690555
Totara Ave	0	Philip Leith	-40.625840	172.679508
Ruataniwha inlet	0	Philip Leith	-40.649478	172.669861
Rakopi	42	Rob Jones	-40.588000	172.601000
Parapara	9	Heather Wallace	-40.731937	172.703701



Left -Distribution of spoonbills as recorded in the count. Below left spoonbills at Orphanage creek (Kathryn Richards) Below right 19 spoonbills at Port Motueka (Christine Grove)





## FUN WITH FEATHERS- Alison Balance

For the August meeting, I cobbled together a 'workshop' session on feathers. Alison has written this rather flattering report.

'Paul Bennett entertained and educated us at August's monthly meeting with an interactive session on bird feathers that featured everything from live canaries to leaf blowers. We divided into small groups -depending on whether our on-theme mystery envelope contained a primary feather, a secondary contour feather or a down feather - and made our way between various stations illustrating different aspects of feathers.

If asked what colour a canary is most of us would probably answer 'yellow.' But my group started at a table featuring live canaries in a range of rainbow hues. They come from Paul's extensive collection (he was coy on the subject of exactly how extensive, as his wife Marina was present), which he breeds and shows. Paul is interested in the interplay of genetics and feather pigments, and this is what he had to tell us about the three types of feather pigments:

### **'LIPOCHROMES**

*Literally means "fat colour" These are several fat-soluble pigments that cannot be synthesized by birds and so must be contained in the bird's diet. Generally, they are yellow or red.*

### **MELANINS**

*These can be synthesized by birds. Simplistically they come in 3 sorts*

- **Phaeomelanin** (These are reddish brown pigments which, in finches, tend to be found in the outer part of the feathers)
- **Eumelanin brown**
- **Eumelanin black**

### **PORPHYRINS**

*Less common and are synthesized by birds from amino acids.'*

Our task was to work out which bird featured which combination of lipochrome and melanin pigments, which provoked much head scratching as we tried to guess the genetics behind the 'mostly white with a smattering of light brown' bird, a lovely apricot specimen, several variations of yellow and so on. Very thought provoking for the humans. The birds just carried on eating and occasionally bursting into song.

The next station reminded us that pigments are only part of the feather colour story. There are also structural colours caused by either the refraction or differential absorption of light – think of the glossy iridescent sheen of a pigeon. Paul says that *'essentially iridescence happens when light passes through the outer keratin layer of the feather and is reflected back from the black melanin rodules layer. As it passes back through, the keratin acts as a prism and the light is refracted and split into different colours.'*

When we shone a headlight (the sun) through a prism (the keratin cortex) onto a mirror (the black melanin layers), what we saw was a small rainbow as light was reflected and refracted off the feathers. Revelatory.

And the blue budgie keeping an eye on proceedings? Turns out it is a fraud. Budgie blue is just another trick of the light.

*'Birds cannot make blue pigments. The 'blue' colour in this budgie is caused by air bubbles in the keratin layer. These reflect blue/ violet/UV light but allow all other colours to pass through which are then absorbed by the melanin layer.'*

Then we moved onto how feathers work to create warmth (think soft fluffy down that traps air), to contour feathers whose barbules zip tightly together to create a smooth waterproof surface. And the various roles that feathers play? Multitudinous, from camouflage to tobogganing, and even a 'fight moult' to escape predators.

Scaling up from single feathers to the whole bird, David Melville brought along a box of bird wings (as you do) which we tried to match with flight style. A harrier hawk has passive soaring or high-lift wings, with long primary feathers that spread out to create slots that allow the bird to catch rising thermals of warm air. An albatross, on the other

hand, has active soaring wings that are long and narrow with a strong aerofoil profile, perfect for horizontal cruising just above the ocean waves.

Also in the wing shape mix: rapid take-off, high-speed and elliptical.

The leaf blower blasted into action to demonstrate how air moving across a 'wing on a stick' could generate lift, while plastic balls slotted into channels on either side of a curved cardboard aerofoil showed air molecules crushed together differently on the topside and underside to generate that lift.

The Gold Medal for tolerance goes to the pigeon that assisted Paul in his demonstrations of the various tips and tricks that birds use to be superlative flying machines. Light but strong bones, streamlined shape, producing light solid uric acid instead of voluminous urine, and even nasal cones or baffles to stop too much air rushing up the nose during high-speed flight. The list goes on.

We all marvelled at the Cornell Bird Lab [video](#) showing the downright ridiculous feathers that birds of paradise produce each year. And I was amazed to learn how feathers, which are only produced annually, can change form and function over a year. Think male house sparrow: newly moulted at the end of summer its chest is mostly brown. Yet by the time breeding season comes around a few months later the brown feather tips have worn away revealing a splendid black bib. More feather magic!

Many thanks, Paul and Marina, for an extremely interesting evening.'

## MEMBER PROFILE -- PETER GAZE

Most members will know Peter Gaze from his long-term commitment and perennial contributions to OSNZ and indeed to bird life in NZ. I think I first became aware of Peter over 30 years ago when he issued me a permit to keep and breed kakariki! Peter's initial interest in birds started in 1971 when he did a year at university. During this time, he discovered the thing called 'ecology' and left to join the ecology division of the now defunct DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) His initial job involved working with Peter Bull on the very first NZ Birds Atlas! Some of his other work at this time was on native birdlife in the Orongorongo Valley including a study of rifleman. He moved to Nelson in the late 70s and worked with Mick Clout on birdlife in pine forests and other projects. DOC formed in 1987, and Peter swapped to the new department where the emphasis was more on management than research. Lots of time on islands in the Sounds but also special focus on protection of species such as Hutton's shearwater, whio, black-fronted tern and rock wren. By the time he left DOC in 2010, Peter's high level of knowledge and expertise made him much in demand and he has been contracted to assist a wide variety of projects from Jansoon to predator eradication and repopulation of islands.

Through much of this time he has been active in and worked closely with OSNZ, being a one-time National secretary and RR for the Nelson region. And we all know how well presented and engaging his contributions still are!

While I confess to having to keep my inner twitcher under control, this aspect of birding has never really interested Peter whose real love and interest is laudably the conservation of native birds in native habitats. He has done much work with NZ wrens and perhaps his greatest birding moments have been watching rock wrens in alpine passes. A rare, unique and diminutive bird in a vast landscape. Studying a single species like this in such depth has given him real expertise and he became the go to person for this bird. Peter's work eradicating predators and reintroducing extirpated species on islands in the Sounds has also given him immense satisfaction, leaving a wonderful and permanent wildlife legacy. He also gets great pleasure from seeing the growth and development of our local group-- now with so many new members. He is particularly pleased by the range of activities, the variety of birding interests catered for and the way so many members are raising their hands to take active roles.



I gave Peter the opportunity to be transported to see any bird in any birding spot in the world. His answer-A seabird island at dusk with the spectacle of thousands of seabirds returning to their chicks. I think many of us would be very happy to join him



Well, that's it for another couple of months. Many thanks to all the people who have contributed. And -as always, please consider sending in a photo, review, article -in fact anything of birdy interest. Cheers Paul Bennett

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