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Otago Region Newsletter 6/2024

June 2024



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/birdsotago/>

Ornithological Snippets

2 **Marsh Crake/Kotoreke** and a **Black-fronted Dotterel** were at Waitaki Intake Ponds on 29 May. The first returning **SIPO/Tōrea** were seen in Balclutha on 31 May. On 26 May at Sandfly Bay 3 **Antarctic Fulmar** and a **White-headed Petrel** were seen offshore. Continuing **Little Black Shags/Kawau tūi** were reported at Kaikorai Estuary (5) on 18 May, Leith Mouth on 31 May & Hawkesbury Lagoon on 8 June. A **Pied Shag/Kāruhiruhi** was photographed at Lake Johnson near Queenstown on 13 May, and 1 was reported from Elfin Bay, Lake Wakatipu on 12 June. A **Royal Spoonbill/Kōtuku ngutupapa** was foraging in Dunedin Botanic Gardens on 11 June.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

As you will no doubt be aware, fieldwork for the NZ Bird Atlas finished at the end of May. After 5 years, 35830 checklists were submitted, with 343 out 345 squares in Otago receiving at least one visit. 158 species of bird were recorded, with the top 3 in terms of distribution being Lesser Redpoll, Chaffinch and Yellowhammer, being seen in 313 squares. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and we look forward to seeing the results published some time next year.

Now that the fieldwork for the Atlas is over, there are two things to do. Firstly, if you haven't done so already, please change the portal so that your sightings are submitted to the "New Zealand eBird" portal. Secondly, continue to get out and submit checklists. We no longer have to worry about crossing square boundaries, but please try to keep travelling counts to less than 1km.

Richard 027 281 8701 or cluthaphotos@gmail.com

BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

This year, Birds NZ Otago meetings will return to the **Benham Seminar Room**, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street, Dunedin.

A reminder for members, the ground floor doors to the Zoology building **will be locked at 7.30**. Please ensure you arrive in time to enter the double doors, at the rear of the car parking area.

Newsletter notes from the RR

At the recent National Conference the following changes to Officers and Council Members were agreed. Please note the following changes to **email addresses**.

Natalie Forsdick has taken on the President role.

Natalie's new address is president@birdsnz.org.nz

Ian Armitage has taken on the role as Vice President.

Ian's new address is vp@birdsnz.org.nz

Bruce McKinlay stood down as President and remains on Council (ex officio) for 1 year.

Bruce's new address is council.5@birdsnz.org.nz

Two new Council members have joined the team:

Mark Ayre: council.2@birdsnz.org.nz

Martine Darrou (co-opted): council.4@birdnz.org.nz

Congratulations to Martine!! A local member.

All current contact details are available at birdsnz.org.nz/contact/

News items:

NZ Bird Atlas complete! birdsanz.org.nz/news/new-zealand-bird-atlas-complete/

NZ Garden Bird Survey 2024: birdsanz.org.nz/news/nz-garden-bird-survey/

Free Book for New Members: birdsanz.org.nz/news/free-book-for-new-members/

10% Discount Potton & Burton books: birdsanz.org.nz/news/special-discount-offer/

More Birds in the Bush Webinar: birdsanz.org.nz/news/more-birds-in-the-bush/

Media Releases:

RNZ news: [Where New Zealand's birds are: First 'bird atlas' in 20 years finished](https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/where-new-zealand-s-birds-are-first-bird-atlas-in-20-years-finished)

NZ Herald: [NZ Bird Atlas project: Tairāwhiti birders make significant contribution](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz-bird-atlas-project-tairāwhiti-birders-make-significant-contribution)

Newsletters:

Wellington Newsletter: birdsanz.org.nz/news/wellington-newsletter/

Articles:

PAF Article Weka genetics: birdsanz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2023-PAF-Weka-genetic-research-Article-2405.pdf



I'm calling for expressions of interest for a field trip in Paradise <https://paradisetrust.nz/>
The proposal is to gather and stay in the huts at Paradise Trust, just north of Glenorchy on the weekend of September Friday 13 to Sunday 15.

I have pre-emptively booked the Garden of Eden (sleeps 6) and Dolan huts (sleeps 3). You can find details on the hut facilities and Paradise Trust on the link above.

Paradise will hold them for a short time without charge while we confirm interest and numbers.

This is a nice opportunity to do some post-atlas birding – checklists will of course be encouraged. This will be a chance for Otago members who are experienced or just getting started with birding to meet up with some of the Queenstown/ Glenorchy based people with an interest in birding.

There will be opportunities to bird into the Earnslaw Burn, Dart State Forest, Routeburn, Glenorchy wetland, and check the Rees and Dart braided rivers for braided river birds depending on what people would like to do.

Please contact Dawn at birds.otago@birds.nz.org.nz if this sounds like something you'd like to do. We may have to ferry people across the Jordan Creek, but we'll "cross that river when we come to it".

Kind regards
Dawn

The New Zealand Garden Bird Survey



Haere mai ngā kaitaiao tangata whenua.
Welcome, fellow citizen scientists.

New Zealand's largest and longest-running citizen science project is about to begin and we are thrilled to invite everybirdy to join us and make our birds count.

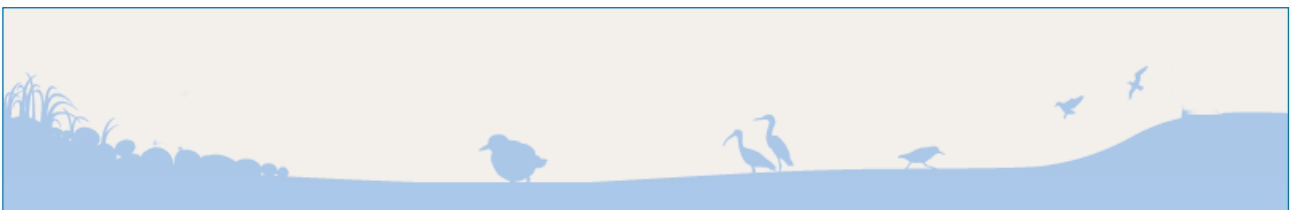
<https://gardenbirdsurvey.nz/>

Wader Count

There will be a high tide of 2.01M at 10.57am at Dunedin on Sunday June 30th.

In case of bad weather, the reserve day is July 21st when high tide will be 2.04M at 3.49pm at Dunedin.

Contact: **Maree Johnstone** mareej@kinect.co.nz



Plans for the great winter Royal Spoonbill search for the 2024 National Census; Saturday 13th July; prizes to be won!

Please put in your diaries, Saturday 13th July (inclement weather backup day, 14th July) so that you can take part in the National Royal Spoonbill Census. We will need several teams to cover all the possible locations that spoonbills may be hanging out and it should all be done on the same day to minimise double counting as the birds are likely to move around. Start your search from about midday when the birds should be out feeding as the tide recedes; you could check on way out and on way home. Anecdotal reports would suggest more spoonbill are staying in Otago than previously - we will find out with this count. Prizes for finding a spoonbill and for most interesting bird seen on the day (chosen by acclamation at July meeting).

From eBird July records (see map) the following areas should be targeted:

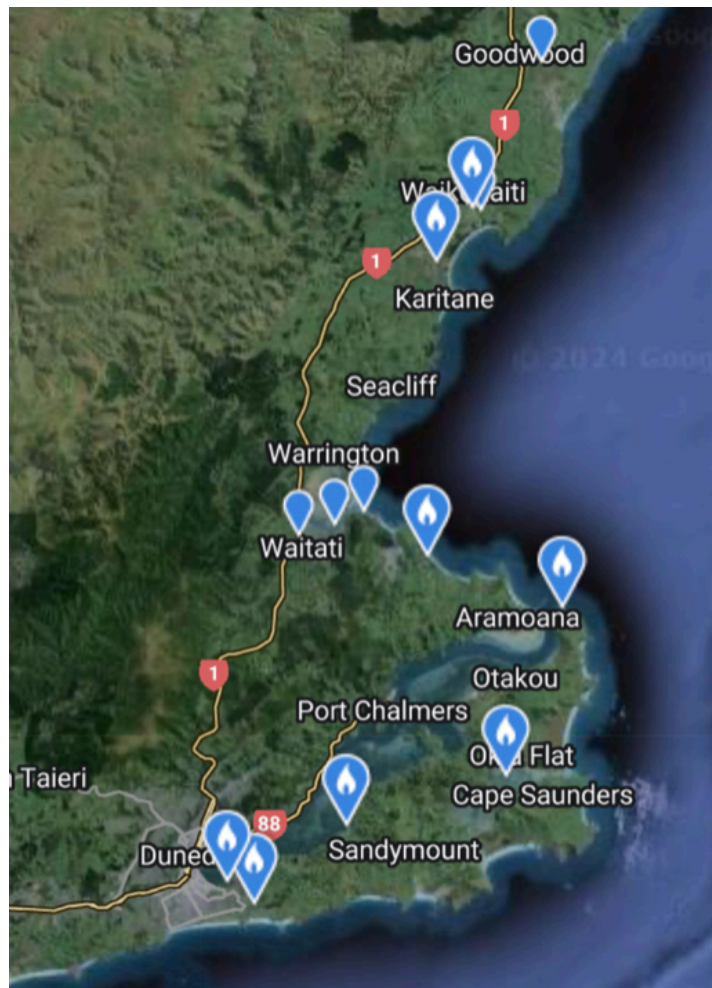
Blueskin Bay/Waitati, Karitane, Hawksbury, Pleasant River, Andersons Lagoon(Goodwood).

Would anyone like to canoe to Shag River estuary?

Otago Peninsula harbour side, Hoopers and Papanui, Tomahawk and Andersons Inlet.

Kaikorai estuary, Brighton and wetland behind, Taieri Mouth and wetlands just south of township.

Catlins Lake and estuary, Pounaweia, New Haven (Papatowai)



Please let me know if you want to participate so I can put you on the list to send you more information and fieldlog sheets. Also indicate which places you would like to survey. We will make up teams for each area for the survey.

Mary nzmaryt@gmail.com
Royal Spoonbill Census Coordinator.

Hotel Chathams Tours



Hotel Chathams have reached out to let us know they have scheduled a 2025 birding tour, where Mike Bell will be hosting a group able to access locations which the normal tours do not venture into or include on their itinerary.

For details, follow the link below.

<https://hotelchathamstours.co.nz/tc-events/2025-annual-chatham-island-bird-tour/>

Wanted: Otago and Foveaux shags



Otago Shag Oscar Thomas

BirdsNZ member and Associate Professor Nic Rawlence, Director of the Otago Palaeogenetics Laboratory, Department of Zoology at University of Otago is calling for freshly dead Otago and Foveaux shags from Otago, Southland and Rakiura Stewart Island coastlines/colonies.

Nic has a MSc student looking into the genetic underpinnings of the pied and bronze plumage in Otago and Foveaux shags.

They have a DOC permit that allows them to receive these and do genetic research on

them so would appreciate it if our coastal members could keep an eye out for dead chicks, fledglings, juveniles, and adults that could be bagged and put in a freezer, and later and collected.

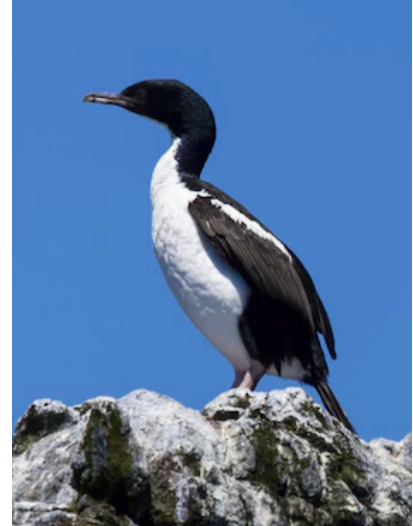
When the research is finished, the birds will be offered to Tūhura Otago Museum.

Remember to keep yourself safe by using PPE when handling dead birds and thoroughly wash hands etc afterwards.

Further information on beach finds can be found at

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/schemes/beachpatrolscheme/>

Email nic.rawlence@otago.ac.nz



Foveaux Shag David Rintoul

Bringing Back the Birds - Checkpoints and Opportunities



On Tuesday evening 18 June, I gave a talk at the Whakatipu Wildlife Trust Talk at the Wildside meeting held at the Queenstown Events Centre. The talk was titled Bringing Back the Birds - Checkpoints and Opportunities and attracted 45 attendees. The talk given canvassed the achievements of the recently finished Bird Atlas project, introduced attendees to the eBird, and Merlin platforms and

some of the fantastic outputs that can be found in the Status and Trends pages of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology eBird website.

I talked about some local bird monitoring projects and the bird fauna found in the wide range of local habitats. Keen attendees were challenged to get their birding started by helping to watch for and report on the season's first returning SIPOS and search their legs for bands. Emma Williams and Anne Schlesselmann kindly agreed to allow me to share some of the slides shown at their presentation with slides showing where the colour coded bands are given to SIPO.

The talk benefited greatly from amazing photographs from Oscar Thomas and local photographer Martin Barwood and local trapping groups were invited to expand their community to include members who want to monitor birds.

Some of the research links shared with me by Anne Schlesselmann and David Melville are provided below:

[Increasing wader abundance » Manaaki Whenua \(landcareresearch.co.nz\)](https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/)
<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/collaborative-agreement-with-doc/>

Dawn Palmer

Early on 29 May

As the end of the Atlas reporting period neared, I was repeatedly drawn to a block of blank squares on the Atlas Effort map for autumn. They were on the south side of Lake Wakatipu, between Walter Peak and Mount Nicholas Stations, and hence not particularly accessible. Early on



29 May Dawn Palmer and I loaded our bikes onto the Walter Peak staff boat, which allowed us maximum time ashore to complete our task. The weather was not quite what we were hoping for, as the previous day's sunny and calm conditions were replaced by low cloud, a westerly breeze and the threat of rain, as well as a fresh fall of snow not that high above us.



We decided to head straight for Mount Nicholas, as that was where the most pressing need was. We followed the “main” road westwards, with good numbers of birds in the paddocks, and a mob of sheep on the road which slowed our progress slightly. We started checklists as we neared the next square boundary, before diverting to a (nameless) lake up a track, which Dawn on her e-bike was able to cruise up, while I pushed my me-bike up at a leisurely pace; this was to become a feature of the next few hours! There were not masses of birds on the lake, but notable were about a dozen Great Crested Grebes/Pūteketeke, alongside 2 species of shag/Kawau, numerous NZ Scaup/Pāpango, a family of Black Swans/Kakīānau and a late invasion by 150 Canada Geese/Kuihi. By this stage I was looking forward to reaching the airstrip, assuming it would be fairly flat, but this was not

the case, and Dawn politely cycled in circles as I did my best to catch up.

Next we headed north through Mount Nicholas Station, and into DP15, which had only been visited once in the previous 5 years. We managed to spend almost an hour counting here, with 1 stationary and 3 travelling checklists, aware that we needed to get back in time to catch our boat ride home. This was a really nice area of native scrub with a small wetland which would surely reward a more leisurely visit. There were no unexpected birds here, but it was nice to catch up with NZ Pipit/Pīhoihoi, and there were plenty of NZ Fantails/Pīwakawaka and Bellbird/Korimako. A brief visit to a stand of beech forest unfortunately found us only a Dunnock.

Then it was time to head back to Walter Peak, with the help of a tail wind for the most part. A black phase Fantail put in an appearance, and we saw our first House Sparrows/Tiu of the day. We had time for a couple of checklists on the way back, adding White-faced Heron/Matuku moana to the tally, before the gentle descent to the wharf, and back across to Queenstown on TSS Earnslaw. A big thank you to Dawn for facilitating the access to the stations, and to Real NZ for transporting us across the lake.

As a postscript to this trip, keen prospective member Suzanne Rose, who attended some of the introduction to birding workshops run by Dawn in Queenstown, and has become an enthusiastic birder, was also supported by Real NZ to get across the lake into McKinlay Creek in DQ17 with permission of both Cecil and Walter Peak Station arranged by Dawn on the penultimate day of the Atlas effort. Suze recorded twenty species including NZ Falcon, NZ pipit and little pied shag, tui, bellbird, fantails and silvereyes with scaup and her longest checklist in Beach Bay.

Richard Schofield

Programme 2024

Birds NZ Otago meetings have returned to the **Benham Seminar Room, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street, Dunedin**

Birds NZ Otago Monthly Meeting Zoom Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83922655184?pwd=QapM32iZ0YWPrKuNYdCKPWwaYS36eg.1>

Meeting ID: 839 2265 5184

Passcode: 633186

June	Tuesday	25	Shanta McPherson	Titipounamu/riflemen on Otago Peninsula
June	Sunday	30	Wader Count	High tide 10.57am Dunedin. Reserve day is July 21st at 3.49pm when high tide will be 2.04M at Dunedin
July	Saturday	13	The great Otago Spoonbill Search Mary nzmaryt@gmail.com	To join a team please email Backup day 14th July
July	Tuesday	23	Dr Emma Williams	Birds beyond borders: Mobile threatened species
Aug	Tuesday	27	Vanessa Barry	Buller's albatross population genomics
Sept	Tuesday	24	Bruce McKinlay	Birds of the Solomon Islands
Oct	Tuesday	22	Te Arawhetu Waipoua	GPS tracking kuaka / Whenua Hou diving petrel
Nov	Tuesday	26	William Perry	Annual Quiz Night

Regular Field trips are held, usually on first Saturdays or Sundays. Check for details within the newsletters. We carpool for these trips and share expenses.

Suggestions for locations for field trips and atlassing trips, and offers to help lead trips would really be appreciated, please contact Dawn birds.otago@birdsNZ.org.nz

Contributions for the next newsletter should reach the editor by **16 July** sodlin@gmail.com

Disclaimer

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