



BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter November 2024

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Turnstone at Manawatu River estuary, by Neill Haggarty

From the Regional Representative

The Manawatū Estuary Trust celebrated and welcomed the waders back to Manawatū Estuary Saturday 5th October. There were around 90 people including about 10 from Birds NZ Manawatu. We saw around 150 Bar-tailed Godwits a handful of both Red Knots and Wrybills, and three Pacific Golden Plovers.

Five members went on the Birds NZ Manawatū eBird October Big day organised by Kirsten Olsen. See trip report later in the Newsletter.

Spring wader count is Saturday 16th or Sunday 17th November. Please contact Phil Battley if you want to participate: p.battley@massey.ac.nz .

The national coordinated Royal Spoonbill nest and breeding count will take place from November through to January. Please contact me if you are interested in taking part: kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com

The last meeting of the year is 13th November. There is no 'big talk' at the meeting. However, Phil Battley will tell us about a meeting that he attended in China, about a flyway initiative. Neill Haggarty has planned a bird quiz. Jackie Carr has a 10 minute 'surprise talk' and we can all discuss plans for 2025.

Please send me photos and notes about your bird adventures and sightings or other bird news for the newsletter on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com . **Deadline for the December issue is 26th November.**

Talk at the October 2024 meeting

Twenty-five turned up to hear Chris Tuffley talk about his trip to the Chatham Islands in January 2024. Chris showed his amazing photos of seabirds and land birds unique to the Chathams. There were also some nice photos of the landscape and other sea and terrestrial animals and plants.

Some seabirds around the Chatham Islands can be difficult to identify and there were a couple of discussions about which bird Chris actually had in a couple of photos. Sandy Bartle and Jennifer Wasley shared some of their memories and experience from the islands, which complimented Chris' talk.



Photo by
Chris Tuffley

Bird sightings

The waders are returning to the Manawatū River estuary. The highest count reported until now are 30 Bar-tailed Godwits 12 Red Knot, 4 Pacific Golden Plover and 1 Ruddy Turnstone. Neill Haggarty also saw two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers there on 28th October.

Four New Zealand Dotterel have been reported at Ohau beach.

The eight Cattle Egrets at Whangaehu Beach Road were last reported at the eBird October Big day (12th October).

Photo by Neill Haggarty
Sharp-tailed Sandpipers
at Manawatu River estuary



Māori now a Common name option in eBird

As part of the taxonomic updates in eBird, the Aotearoa New Zealand eBird team has worked with the eBird team to provide two common name updates; English (New Zealand) common names, as well as an exciting new common name option, te reo Māori! Bird names in eBird are based on the eBird/Clements taxonomy, which is maintained in English. eBird supports 107 languages and customized versions of bird names. There were 8 new additions this cycle, including Māori. To learn more, go to: <https://ebird.org/region/NZ/post/common-name-updates-aotearoa-new-zealand>

2024 eBird Taxonomy Update

The annual eBird Taxonomy Update is happening now! Stay tuned on the eBird webpage <https://ebird.org/news/2024-taxonomy-update>. This complex process may require a couple weeks before it is fully complete. During the update, especially in the first day or two, species names may appear in unexpected ways, other records may temporarily become subspecies groups, you may receive unexpected species in your alerts, and your species totals may jump around, and range maps may be incomplete, unavailable, or temporarily incorrect. Please, don't adjust your data if you notice this! The eBird Taxonomy team is working hard to update your records for you. Wait until the process is complete. It will be announced on eBird.

Manawatū riverbed-nesting shorebird survey 2024

Nikki McArthur; a Birds NZ member based in Marlborough, is organising and conducting a survey of the rivers in the Manawatu. The project is funded by Horizons Regional Council and Birds NZ's Research Fund. Nikki has recruited local birds NZ members and other experienced field workers to help with the survey. The survey started two weeks ago and Nikki has just sent an update on the survey. Below are extracts and a summary:

"We're now approximately 30% of the way through our survey, having surveyed 170 km of the 576 km of riverbed that we're hoping to cover. We've completed a survey of the Mataikona River, and the majority of the upper Manawatū River (from Dannevirke to Manawatū Gorge), as well as the Mangaone and Pohangina Rivers.

We have found a healthy little breeding population of South Island Pied Oystercatchers (SIPO) on these rivers. We've counted 20 adult birds most of them paired up, either guarding chicks or sitting on nests. SIPO are present on the rivers either side of the Manawatū Gorge. If we continue to find SIPO at a similar rate on the rivers yet to be surveyed, the Manawatū SIPO breeding population may turn out to be larger than the breeding population on the rivers of Hawke's Bay, which would more than double the number of SIPO known to be currently breeding in the North Island.

We found a SIPO carrying a red leg flag inscribed with the alphanumeric code "CC6" on Pohangina River. This bird was banded by Adrian Riegen and his team north of Thames on the 2nd June 2021 and hadn't been resighted since then. This bird is also the first Thames-banded bird to have been resighted in the North Island outside of the Auckland area.

Another unusual oystercatcher sighting was a mixed SIPO/VOC pair present at the confluence of the upper Manawatū and Mangaone Rivers. Both birds were exhibiting highly agitated behaviour, indicating that they were guarding chicks. Records of hybridisation between these two species are exceedingly rare in the North Island but a 'swarm' of hybrid oystercatchers has been present on the coastline near the Ashley Estuary for a number of years.

Our dotterel counts have been more or less as we would have expected. We've counted 119 adult Banded Dotterels so far, and 222 Black-fronted Dotterels. Black-fronted Dotterels are both more numerous and abundant than Banded Dotterels on these rivers - no surprise. A similar pattern is found on the rivers of the Wairarapa.

We've encountered one Black-billed Gull nesting colony on the upper Manawatū River just downstream from the Mangaitanoka River confluence (visible from the SH2 bridge north of Mangaitanoka township). There were 229 adult Black-billed Gulls at the colony, which 55 occupied nests. The majority of these nests are still being built."

Nikki McArthur

Trip report on Birds NZ Manawatū eBird October Big Day

Written by Chris Tuffley, edited by Kirsten Olsen

The field trip on eBird October Big day was attended by Neill Haggarty, Jacky Karr, Stephen Legg and Chris Tuffley. It was led by Regional Representative Kirsten Olsen.

The day started cloudy and cold, but soon turned bright and sunny for much of the day before turning cloudy and cool again as the afternoon drew on. Our first stop was on Whangaehu Beach Road where we hoped to sight a small flock of Cattle egret that had been reported there. We managed to spot them, but had only a distant view of them from the road until the landowner invited us onto her farm for a closer look. Skylarks were also present in good numbers.

We then proceeded to Koitiata Lagoon, followed by Tūtaenui Reservoir. Highlights at Koitiata included a Mātātā / Fernbird sighted by Stephen and Kirsten on the way to the lagoon, and Pohowera / Banded Dotterels, Black-fronted Dotterels, and Ngutu Pare / Wrybill at the lagoon. Neill and Chris took a lot of photos here. See Neil's photo of a Black-fronted Dotterel.



Black-fronted Dotterel at Koitiata, by Neill Haggarty

At Tūtaenui we saw over ten species of water-dwelling birds, including some with chicks. Black Shags were nesting near the dam. We had close encounters with Pīwakawaka / Fantails and Riroriro / Grey Warblers, and heard a Pīpīwharau / Shining cuckoo singing close above.



Stephen & Neil entering data to eBird
Photo by Chris Tuffley



Stephen & Chris at Koitiata
Photo by Kirsten Olsen

The final stop of the day for three keen members of the group was the lake at Hawkstone Golf Course, to check for Kōtuku Ngutupapa / Royal spoonbill. None were seen - but we did unexpectedly spot two more Pohowera / Banded dotterel in the distance!

Taking into account some individual checklists from before we gathered (at Manawatu River estuary and Palmerston North city) we collectively saw or heard a total of 57 species over the course of the day. An eBird trip report with all the checklists and species seen or heard can be accessed here:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/282061> . An excellent outing - many thanks to Kirsten for her organisation.

Upcoming meetings

Birds NZ Manawātū meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, **7:15pm in Val Kenward Room at the Palmerston North Community Leisure Centre, 569 Ferguson Street.**

Wednesday 13 November 2024 meeting

There will not be a presentation or speaker at this meeting. However, Phil Battley will tell us about a meeting that he attended in China about **the Pacific flyway corporation**. Neill Haggarty has planned a **Bird quizz** so, bring your bird brain with you. Jacki Carr has prepared a 10-minute **surprise talk**. Finally, we will all discuss a **plan for next year**.

Meetings in 2025

12th February, 12th March, Annual Meeting (Financial status, annual report to council), 9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July, 13th August, 10th September, 8th October, 12 November

Upcoming trips and events

Spring/summer wader census

Spring/summer wader census for the Manawatū region will be on **Saturday 16th or Sunday 17th November.**

Contact Phil Battley: p.battley@massey.ac.nz or Kirsten Olsen: kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com .

Photo by
Neill Haggarty
1st Oct 2023
Manawatu
Estuary, eBird



The Peter Schweigman Memorial Royal Spoonbill Colony and Nest Count, 2024

In November, December and January a systematic, coordinated nationwide survey will be undertaken to locate Royal Spoonbill colonies and count the active nests and number of birds in attendance. Each region will coordinate its own survey. In Manawatū we know that there are at least four or five likely nesting sites. But there might be more. If you are interested in taking part in the colony and nest count please contact me: **Kirsten Olsen, email kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com or phone 0273546010.**

Photo by
Kirsten Olsen



Links to other regions' newsletters and programmes

South Auckland Newsletter – October:

birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/

Notices

Report from 2024 Nelson Youth Camp:

birdsnz.org.nz/news/2024-birds-nz-youth-camp/

Next Birds NZ Youth Camp is planned from **15-20 December 2024** at **Pukorokoro/Miranda Shorebird Centre**. Read details [here](#)

2025 BirdsNZ Conference

The 2025 Birds New Zealand Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held in **Auckland** from **31st May-2nd June** over King's Birthday weekend. All events and meals will be at the Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel.

Deadline for **early-bird registration is 28th February 2025**.

Abstracts must be submitted by 31st March 2025.

Online registration and conference details will be available soon.

13th Australasian Ornithological Conference

BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand are excited to announce the **13th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC)** will be held in **Perth/Boorloo**.

The AOC will be held from **Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 November 2025** at the University of Western Australia, with side events planned for the days before and after. The AOC is the primary conference for BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand. The largest biennial gathering of amateur and professional ornithologists and avian researchers from Australasia. Key dates will be available soon. Sign up for email updates at <https://birdlife.org.au/events/australasian-ornithological-conference-2025/>

Shorebirds Identification Booklet

Birdlife Australia has given Birds New Zealand permission to upload their "Shorebirds Identification Booklet", to the Birds New Zealand Website. It is now available on the [Resources and Tools](#) page with a direct link:

birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Shorebird-ID-Booklet-Birdlife-Australia.pdf. You may find this quite useful!

Bounty Islands – filled with wildlife and frozen in time

Vertebrates Curator Dr Colin Miskelly has written a very interesting blog about his visit to the Bounty Islands for two days. You can access the [block here](#)

Health and safety

The Birds New Zealand Council has asked the regions to include health and safety information in the newsletters.

Health and safety of Birds New Zealand's members when they participate in Birds NZ organised activity, like meetings, collection of data and fieldtrips, is important to the Council. The [Health and Safety Policy](#) can be found on Birds NZ webpage. Press [Here](#) to get to the policy.

To make it more practicable, the Council has developed [health and safety guidelines for field trips](#) that also can be found on the website.

The guidelines state: *“At a health and safety briefing before a field trip commences the trip leader will describe the route, any specific or potential physical difficulties that might be encountered, and the approximate times for lunch, tea breaks and the end of the trip.”*

It further states: *“If a member has an allergy or medical condition, they should bring their own anti-histamines and personal medications. The trip leader should be advised of medical problems a member has and how to deal with them. Bring a mobile phone and share phone numbers with others. Don't hesitate to call 111 for any incidents involving injury.” (...)*
“The trip leader should check the weather forecast for the day and, if necessary, monitor the weather conditions during the trip. Turn back if the weather deteriorates. Each member should bring sufficient food and drinking water for their personal needs.”

Finally, it is stated in the policy:

“Instances of accidents or ill health of members and others whilst carrying out activities in any capacity for Birds New Zealand are required to be reported promptly to the Regional Representative who in turn will advise the President without delay. Records of accidents will be recorded in the annual reports of Regional Representatives.”

So please, if you have any incident that could have resulted in injury or results in injury while participating in Birds New Zealand activity, report it to the Regional Representative. In Manawatū it is: Kirsten Olsen, email birds.manawatu@birdsnz.org.nz or phone 027 354 6010

Contribution to future Birds NZ Manawatu newsletters

Please send photos and text that would be appropriate for this newsletter.
To Kirsten Olsen kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com .

Deadline for December 2024 issue: 26 November 2024

Please send your contributions to: kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com

Contacts in Birds New Zealand Manawatū Branch:

Regional representative: Kirsten Olsen
email: birds.manawatu@birdsnz.org.nz

Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty
email: iolaandneill@inspire.net.nz
Please report interesting bird sightings to Neill

Wader count coordinator: Phil Battley
email: p.battley@massey.ac.nz

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