

# Matuku: Birds NZ

## Waikato Region

### Newsletter February 2025



Image by Imogen Warren

#### February Meeting Wednesday 19th Bird Brainstorm: Ask & Learn

Join us for an engaging and interactive session where birders of all levels can come together to share knowledge and ask questions (no question is stupid). Whether you're curious about bird behavior, identification, habitats, or any other avian topic, this is the perfect opportunity to learn from fellow bird lovers. Bring your questions, photos, books or equipment and share your insights as we explore the fascinating world of birds together.

**Wednesday 19th February 7.30 pm** at 5 Northway Street, Te Rapa at the DOC building. Press the buzzer to get entry or as a last resort ring 021 2032982. Non-members welcome

#### Upcoming Events

##### Next meeting

- **Wednesday 19 February** - Birding Brainsotrm
- **March 19th** meeting speaker to be confirmed

##### Upcoming OSNZ trips

- **15-16 February** Harbour Census see below for details

##### Miranda Shorebird Center news

- **Sunday 2nd March**  
Autumn Migration Day

#### November meeting recap

Members joined Elana Marais in person and online to learn about the secretary bird that frequents grass lands of South Africa and other African countries. It is quite an unusual bird of prey as it walks rather than flies for much of the time. Nests are built in flimsy trees and are reused every year. The young spend many months with the parents before becoming independent. Elena had the interesting task of becoming very familiar with various skulls of rodents and insect wings as she pulled apart the birds excreted pellets to see what their most common food sources were. The birds will often nest in trees on farmland and are not perturbed by farm machinery coming close to their nests. Thanks Elana for such an interesting talk.



Royal spoonbill by Craig McKenzie

## Sudden death of past Waikato Regional Representative Bruce Postil

We were sad to hear of the passing of our immediate past regional representative Bruce Postil on the second of January. Bruce was found unconscious in his villa in Christchurch and passed away a few hours later with his 2 daughters in attendance aged 79 years. Bruce had been involved in conservation for a large number of years at Mount Cook, the West Coast and Waikato. Some of you will remember he was involved with the Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre and with the flyaways that the godwits use and went to North Korea for this work as a volunteer. Closer to home as regional representative led the harbour censuses at Kawhia, Raglan and Aotea harbours for a number of years which have been going for over 40 years.

## Harbour bird census February 15-16

The annual summer harbour bird census of Aotea, Kawhia and Raglan harbours will be taking place the weekend 15-16th of February with bad weather back up dates of 1-2 March. The important work we do feeds into the national census data kept on migratory and local birds and helps us see the trends in bird numbers. The census is done by boat and by land and some observers are dropped off at different hard to access points on the harbours.

We are short on volunteers and may have to cancel if we don't have enough people. If you have never joined a census I would encourage you to do so. This is an activity open to birders of all levels. Contact [birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com](mailto:birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com) if interested. Cost of activity: no charge

## Hamilton Lake Survey Results

Barry reports lake levels were normal and despite a few of the regular birds missing there were plenty of other birds to count. The Canada Geese were spread out far and wide, the maximum count was 108, not as many as previous months. They were in areas where we don't often see them – at the start of our walk by the restaurant. The high light of the day was the number of shags around the lake – also in various places and all four species present. Lots of goldfinches but no starlings that were counted last month. All welcome to assist Barry on his monthly walks [eurobaz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:eurobaz@xtra.co.nz)

## Regional newsletters

Interested to know what is happening in other parts of the country? Read the other regional newsletters [here](#)

## Events

- **Online moult workshop** 5 February with recordings made available later
- **Matuku (bittern) Link Wetland Festival Open Day** Saturday 01 Feb
- **Oceania Seabird Symposium** Auckland 14-17 April
- 31 May - 2 June Birds NZ **Annual conference** Auckland. Early bird [registrations](#) close Feb 28. Students can apply for [funding](#) to attend
- Birds NZ Auckland region have shared their events for the next 6 months - see below for details

## Tutukaka pelagic birding trip November - Poor Knights Isl

7 members signed up for the November Petrel Station pelagic boat tour with Scott Brooks. We had perfect weather and were lucky enough to witness 2 'boilups' where the fish are having a feeding frenzy and attract huge number of birds. Scott is passionate about seabirds and he counted over 100,000 that day. Nick was delighted to see a small number of grey ternlet (blue-grey noddy) on a rock stack. Petrels, shearwaters and prions were in large numbers but unfortunately the albatross were absent that day and we only got a distant glimpse of a white capped mollymawk but despite the distance its colossal wings were impressive. We all agreed that it was an amazing day out.

## Many more bird fossil species named

An astonishing eleven new fossil bird species were named from Aotearoa during 2022 and 2023. Four of these already had entries in NZ Birds Online. Publication of the 6th edition checklist prompted publication of pages for the other seven: [Bannockburn swan](#), [Zealandian tropicbird](#), [Fordyce's penguin](#), [Stonehouse's penguin](#), [Wilson's penguin](#), [Hakataramea albatross](#), and [Tina's giant petrel](#).

## Spoonbill census

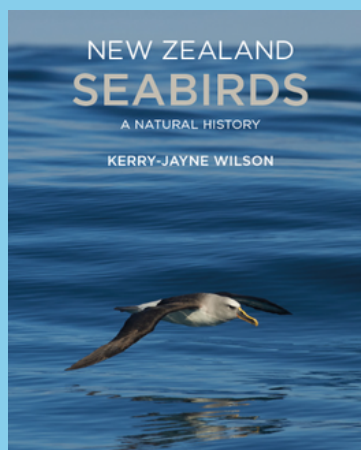
Spoonbills were seen nesting on Lake Kimihia in mid December and some birds were seen flying into nesting sites with nesting material. Local farmer Derry Hedley was a great help allowing us to survey the lake from his house. He is a keen birder himself and notes that the spoonbills in the past have nested on top of the duck shooting hides.

## Interesting reading

Albatross diet: Composition of natural prey versus fisheries bait/waste study can be found [here](#).

## Want to know more about seabirds?

Purchase your copy of New Zealand Seabirds by Kerry-Jane Wilson. For a donation this stunning book can be yours. Get in touch or come along to the meetings to get your copy. See more details below



# UPCOMING MEETINGS 2025

Meetings 3rd Wednesday of the month 7.30 pm at 5 Northway Street, Te Rapa



## **FEBRUARY 19th Bird Brainstorm: Ask & Learn**

Join us for an engaging and interactive session where birders of all levels can come together to share knowledge and ask questions (no question is stupid). Whether you're curious about bird behavior, identification, habitats, or any other avian topic, this is the perfect opportunity to learn from fellow bird lovers. Bring your questions, photos or equipment and share your insights as we explore the fascinating world of birds together.

## **MARCH 19th**

Speaker to be confirmed

## **APRIL 16th Members show and tell**

Come along and share in 5 - 10 minutes where you've been and what birdlife you've seen. Bring some slides if you like. It could be something recent or an older trip.

## **MAY 21st Fairy terns/birds in the Waikato**

Ellen Webb on fairy tern monitoring

## **JUNE 18th conference recap**

Birds 2025 conference recap and discussion

## **JULY 16th**

**Dr Chris Bycroft, Senior Ecologist, Wildlands Rotorua topic TBC**

## **AUGUST 20th Birds & Bites Movie Night**

Midwinter movie and pot luck dinner

## **SEPTEMBER 17th Have your say**

Annual planning meeting for 2026 events & speakers

## **OCTOBER 15th**

Speaker to be confirmed

## **NOVEMBER 19th**

Speaker to be confirmed

**DECEMBER** - No meeting

# UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS

If you have a suggestion for a trip or would like to look for a specific species get in touch so we can advertise this to interested members



## **FEBRUARY 15-16 back up date 1-2 March**

Aotea Harbour, Raglan Harbour and Kawhia Harbour bird census date contact Jeanette for details 0212032982

28th Feb last day for cheap Birds NZ conference registration

## **MARCH 1st - Saturday**

Join us as we say farewell to the godwits who will be in their breeding colours ready to take off to Alaska at the Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre. RSVP to Jeanette 0212032982

## **APRIL**

TBC

## **MAY**

An evening of Kiwi watching and listening in the bush date TBC

## **JUNE**

Annual Birds New Zealand Conference in Auckland King's birthday weekend 31st May-2nd June

Aotea Harbour, Raglan Harbour and Kawhia Harbour bird census date

## **JULY**

Annual garden bird survey

## **AUGUST 24th**

Join us for a bit of bittern spotting down in Marokopa on Sunday August 24th

## **SEPTEMBER**

TBC

## **OCTOBER**

TBC

## **NOVEMBER**

Aotea Harbour, Raglan Harbour and Kawhia Harbour bird census date TBC

**DECEMBER** - no event planned





# BIRDS NZ

## CONFERENCE & AGM

### AUCKLAND

#### 31 MAY - 2 JUNE 2025

(King's Birthday Weekend)

Join us for a weekend of fascinating lectures and presentations focusing on the study and enjoyment of birds!

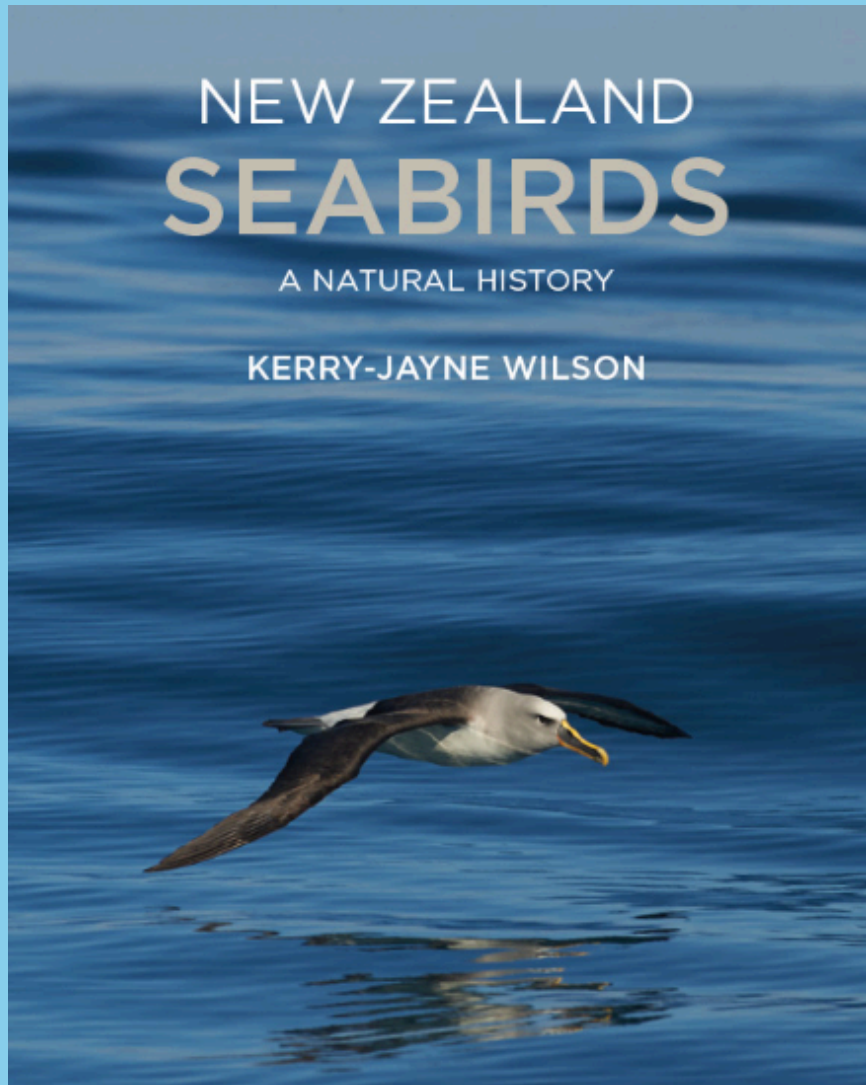
Take part in exciting field trips and share the great company of other members!

Full details and registration form at [birdsNZ.org.nz](https://birdsNZ.org.nz)



© Scott Brooks - [www.thepetrelstation.nz](http://www.thepetrelstation.nz)

**DON'T MISS OUT ON YOUR CHANCE TO PURCHASE THIS BOOK FOR A VERY REASONABLE COST**



New Zealand is the seabird capital of the world – no other country has so many species of breeding seabirds, while about a third of them are only found here. *New Zealand Seabirds*, the first book to be written specifically about these birds, describes the different groups of seabirds, where in New Zealand they occur, their breeding biology, feeding behaviours, the conservation threats they face, and the vast distances they often travel to feed and breed. Written using non-technical language by ornithologist Kerry-Jayne Wilson, this book is an essential companion for anyone who appreciates the wildlife of our coastlines and the oceans beyond.

Recommended retail price is \$49.99 however we have a special deal where this book can be purchased by donation. All proceeds to be donated to conservation

TO PURCHASE contact [birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com](mailto:birdsnzwaikato@gmail.com)



# Birds New Zealand Auckland Regional Programme 2025

JAN – JULY 2025

Meetings held on the 1st Tuesday of every month (except January), 7.30pm  
at Unitec Institute of Technology (Mt Albert, Entry 4, Building 115).

All visitors welcome. \$3 koha.

Further information on meetings, venues and activities:

Ian McLean (Regional Representative) - [birdsuckland@gmail.com](mailto:birdsuckland@gmail.com)

ph. (AH) 021535121

## JANUARY

- 18 Annual Summer Picnic: Cascades/Ark in the Park - Meet at 10.00am and bring your lunch.  
Contact Chris Thompson (021426839) for details and carpooling contact [chrisandpeter@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisandpeter@hotmail.com).

## FEBRUARY

- 01 Wetland Festival at Matuku Link, Te Henga 10:00am - 3.00pm *Member assistance required  
please for our promotional stand: setup from 8am*: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).  
04 Monthly meeting 7.30pm: Ornithological potpourri  
08 Members' summer reports & regional roundup.  
West coast beach patrol (Muriwai) 9.30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).

## MARCH

- 01 NZ dotterel post-breeding flock counts, Mangawhai (& other east coast sites). *Limited observers  
needed* - Contact Gwenda Pulham (0210553365).  
02 Pukorokoro Miranda Autumn Migration/Open Day: Guest speaker at 10am (HT0948).  
04 Monthly meeting 7.30pm: Kevin Barker and Olga Brochner (Birds NZ): Backyard ruru  
adventures.  
08 West coast beach patrol (Karekare) 9:30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).  
16 Ambury Park guided walk 12:00pm (HT1254 4.1m) - *ornithological helpers needed, ideally with  
telescopes/binoculars*. Contact Ian McLean (021535121).  
22 Pūweto (spotless crane) monitoring, Harbourview Orangihina Park, Te Atatu Peninsula 7:30am:  
Contact Trina Smith ([trinasmith.eco@gmail.com](mailto:trinasmith.eco@gmail.com) 021352995).  
29 NZ dotterel post-breeding flock counts, Big Sand Island/Manukapua (& other west coast sites):  
Contact Gwenda Pulham (0210553365).

## APRIL

- 01 Monthly meeting 7.30pm: Rebecca Swan (Snells Beach Shorebird and Coastal Conservation ):  
05 Scan-a-cat.  
West coast beach patrol (Muriwai) 9.30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).



- 14 (Monday) Children's guided bird walk (for Cornwall Park School Holiday Programme), Cornwall Park 10.00am: *assistants needed*. Contact Ian McLean (021535121).
- 25 South Kaipara Lakes dabchick survey 9.00am: Contact Shona Oliver ([shona.oliver@outlook.com](mailto:shona.oliver@outlook.com)).

## MAY

- 04 Michael Taylor Memorial guided bird walk, Cornwall Park 10.00am: *ornithological helpers needed, ideally with binoculars*. Contact Ian McLean.
- 04 Pukorokoro Miranda AGM: Guest speaker at 10am (HT1225).
- 06 Monthly meeting 7.30pm: Edin Whitehead (Northern NZ Seabird Trust) Seabird Research.
- 10 West coast beach patrol (Karekare) 9.30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).
- 25 Pakiri beach patrol 9.30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).
- 31 May – 2 June NZ BIRD CONFERENCE & AGM, Auckland (Ellerslie). Register [here!](#)

## JUNE

- 03 Monthly meeting 7.30pm: Ben Paris (Auckland Council): Long-tailed bats.
- 07 West coast beach patrol (Muriwai) 9.30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).
- 14 Mangawhai wader census -*limited numbers* (HT0922 3.0m): Contact Gwenda Pulham (0210)
- 15 Firth of Thames wader census (HT1005 3.0m): Contact Sue Frostick ([suefro@xtra.co.nz](mailto:suefro@xtra.co.nz)).
- 28 Kaipara wader census (HT1242 3.8m): Contact Adrian Riegen (8149741).
- 29 Manukau (HT1326 3.8m) & Waitemata (HT1016 3.2m) wader census: Contact Kathryn Legrove ([legrovek@gmail.com](mailto:legrovek@gmail.com)).

## JULY

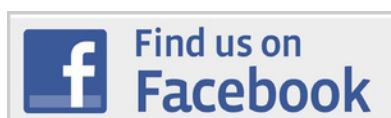
- 01 Monthly meeting 7.30pm: t.b.a.
- 05 West coast beach patrol (Muriwai) 9.30am: Contact Ian McLean (021535121).
- 13 Ambury Park guided walk 11.30am (HT1218 3.9m) - *ornithological helpers needed, ideally with telescopes & binoculars*. Contact Ian McLean (021535121).



*Further information on meetings, venues and activities:*

*Ian McLean (Regional Representative)*  
*[birdsaukland@gmail.com](mailto:birdsaukland@gmail.com)*  
*ph. (AH) 021535121*

OR ...



... search for *Birds Auckland*  
 ... request to be added to the group!

# SO MANY WAYS TO HELP OUR BIRDS



Red-crowned Kākāriki  
(Image: Michael Szabo)



Antipodes Island Parakeet  
(Image: Michael Szabo)



Orange-fronted Kākāriki  
(Image: Michael Szabo)

The Birds New Zealand Research Fund is funding new research on our endemic parakeets to help inform evidence-based conservation management.

You can join us right now for \$80 a year and for students it's just \$40 a year:

[www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/](http://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/)

**JOIN US NOW**



**BIRDS**  
NEW ZEALAND  
*Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa*