



BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter January/February 2025

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Black-billed Gull. Photo by Brinda Pinfold

From the Regional Representative

Happy New Year.

I hope you all have had a nice summer so far, with lots of exciting bird encounters.

One of my exciting bird encounters was a young Karearea | New Zealand Falcon. I and Stephen Legg were biking on Kahuterawa Road back from Sledge Track carpark on the 22nd January in the morning when we saw a Falcon sitting on the side of the road. It was about 8 meters in front of us. It jumped up in a tree, then back on the road where it hopped across the tarmac. Then it jumped back up in the tree. After a couple of minutes admiring it, we decided we had better get back on our bikes. It then flew across the road ahead of us. What a sighting! Three Karearea have been sighted from the nearby Greens road this January.



Our regions' contribution to the Peter Schweigman Memorial Royal Spoonbill Colony and Nest Count, 2024/25 has ended. I want to thank Paul Horton, Jan and Ash Keast, Chris Tuffley, Loraine Cook, Janet Wilson, Dave Coles, Neill Haggarty, Russel Tuck, Stephen Legg and Kirsten Olsen for their effort.

I haven't yet finished the meeting program for the first half of the year and haven't planned any field trips. I have family visiting from Sweden for two months. This has kept me quite busy. I hope to have a few more meetings and a couple of field trips planned by the time I write the next newsletter.

The 2025 Birds New Zealand Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held in **Auckland** from **31st May-2nd June**. Deadline for **early-bird registration** is **28th February 2025**.

I hope to catch up with you at our first Birds NZ Manawatu meeting on 12th February.

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 March issue is 26th February 2025**.

Bird sightings

Neill has summarised some of the rarer bird sightings in our region.

Five New Zealand Dotterels were present at Ohau beach along with the Turnstone still being there. A Bittern was seen at the Foxton loop close to the start of the Piriharakeke walkway. At the Manawatu estuary between 7 and 11 Pacific Golden Plovers have been reported in several sightings along with up to 10 Wrybill and 32 banded dotterel. Further, a red-necked stint, a common tern and three Sharp-tailed sandpipers have been reported. A pair of Royal Spoonbills were seen at the Tutaenui Reservoirs, Marton. Some Royal Spoonbills have also been seen foraging at Rangitikei river estuary.



Common Tern and Wrybill photos by Neill Haggarty



Bird update Whanganui from Paul Gibson

I try to visit the Whanganui Estuary most days, and godwit numbers have remained around 20–23 birds. I first found AJD back on the estuary on 7 January 2025, and he has remained here since. It is the 17th summer he is there. He is expected to depart on, or near, 25 March 2025. On 6 January 2025 we had a visit from a New Zealand dotterel, this time in the company of a banded dotterel. Small numbers of wrybills show up every few days. A large number of pied stilts (120) are on the estuary at present, with four or more showing some extra black, signs of being hybrids, interesting.

Jim Norris and I had an early morning visit to Waitahinga to look for long-tailed cuckoo on 14 January 2025. Three birds put on a good show for us.

A number of visits have been made to Upokongaro to look for the Nankeen night herons. On several day visits we dipped out on seeing any birds. However, a couple of evening visits have been more fruitful, as the birds move around a bit before leaving for the night. On 21 January 2025, around 8 pm, we twice spotted an adult bird bringing twigs into a nest in the Tasmanian Blackwoods, near the SH3 road bridge. Lots of chicks have been hatched this year, but where they have all gone is a mystery.



Spring/summer wader census 17th Nov. 2024

Organised by Phil Battley.

All the sites were covered. Seven members attended. Phil Battley, Sue Moore and Jackie Carr went to the Manawatu River estuary; Stephen Legg and Kirsten Olsen went to the Rangitikei River estuary; Neil Haggarty went to Waikawa Beach and Cleland Wallace to Ohau river mouth. The outcome of the survey will be reported when Phil has received all the data and summarised it. I tried out an adapter that should connect my phone to my scope, but it was quite difficult to adjust. I did manage to take some poor photos of Bar-tailed Godwits, but I think I need to practice more.

Progress on the Peter Schweigman Memorial Royal Spoonbill Colony and Nest Count, 2024/25

During November, December and January a systematic, coordinated nationwide survey was undertaken to locate Royal Spoonbill colonies and count active nests and number of birds in attendance at the colony. Each region has coordinated its own survey. Please contact me if you have identified a nesting site so we can include it in our report to the national coordinator. **Kirsten Olsen**, email kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com or phone **0273546010**.

The colonies that have been identified in our region are at Omanuka lagoon between Himitangi and Tangimoana (29 spoonbills and two nests observed by Chris Tuffley and Lorraine Cook), Voss lagoon near Longburn (13 adult spoonbills and 7 nests observed by Stephen Legg and Kirsten Olsen), Raumai Wetland near Pohangina (11 adult spoonbills, 8 chicks and 4 nests) and at Moutoa/Blind island (30 adults and 14 nests 4 nestlings and 6 fledglings). All 4 sites are on private land. Dave Coles surveyed sites around Shannon but did not find signs of Royal Spoonbill colonies. Neill Hagarty has surveyed Waikawa beach area and has not found signs of any colonies. Jan and Ash Keast surveyed Manawatu river up to Blind Island and did not find any colonies.



2 Royal Spoonbill fledglings
Photo by Kirsten Olsen



Royal Spoonbill colony at Blind Island. Photo by Paul Hoton

Koputaroa School – Foxton Beach field trip

3 December 2024 By Stephen Legg

Koputaroa primary school organised an ecological field trip to Foxton beach for about 70 of its students between 9 am and 2 pm on Tuesday 3rd December. Groups of about a dozen students rotated through six field activities: Coastguard; Fishing; i-Naturalist; i-naturalist- Katipo; Beach Clean-up, and ***Bird watching***.



Birds NZ Manawatu branch led the Bird watching. Three branch members (Stephen Legg, Kirsten Olsen, Jackie Carr) showed the students how to use Scope and Binos and to identify/recognise birds at the Manawatu. We used four scopes and several pairs of binoculars so that each child was able to have enough time to gain hands-on experience with viewing. Once they had mastered the technicalities of closing one eye and looking through the other (wink, wink!), aiming the scope in the right direction (no - not up in the sky!) and controlling the blurry knob (aka the focus dial), it was a joy to hear the amazement in their exclamations when they suddenly saw a giant bird close-up and clearly, for the first time.

“Oh, it has a bright orange beak” – yes, it’s a Caspian Tern. “Wow, it has a really long thin bill” – yes, it’s a bar tailed godwit. “This one is so pretty – it’s completely black and white all over and has really long spindly legs” (yes it’s a pied stilt). “Oh, and this big white one - what a funny long black bill – gosh, it has a spoon on the end – ooh, ah, and golly, it has fluffy feather on its head” (no need to tell you what that one was!). “And this one is so tall and grey and has a completely white face” (yes, you guessed it).

The Manawātū Estuary Trust provided copies of a fabulous little booklet and the coordinating teacher, Dan Hutchinson, produced a terrific ‘bingo’ sheet showing pictures of the estuarine wetland birds to help with bird identification. In the end we saw most of them, though wrybill and dotterel were absent. However, we saw three red knots amongst the 130 godwits. Late in the day two white fronted terns turned up. But best of all was – Fish’n chips all round for a picnic lunch in the sun.

Trip report on trip to Ashhurst domain Sunday 15 December 2024 by Stephen Legg

Kirsten Olsen organised this outing for Birds NZ Manawatū branch to Ashhurst domain and Manawatū River on Sunday the 15th December. Twelve people turned up at Ashhurst Domain at 9:00am. It was an overcast but warm morning. We went to the hide overlooking the wetland first, then walked down to the Manawatū River and finally back up through the bush to the carpark.

At the hide we had a good look at a Kahu | Australasian Harrier sitting on a post and flying around, and Kererus | New Zealand Pigeons that flew from tree to tree. We heard Korimako | Bellbird and Tui on the way down to the river. I must admit that we actually chatted a lot, so maybe we did not pay full attention to the birds.

The main attraction was the Tarāpuka | Black-billed Gull colony by the river. The chicks were still grey fluffy balls. Some of the chicks tested out the water. Others gathered in small groups or stayed close to their parents.

As we were walking up through the bush back to the carpark near the campsite, we were surprised that we had not heard a Shining Cuckoo | Pīpīwharau, but just as we were saying goodbye at the campsite, we heard its characteristic call.

I think most of us enjoyed being out with other birders, observing and exchanging experiences.

An eBird trip report can be accessed via this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/306485>



Black-billed Gull colony. Photo by Brinda Pinfold

Upcoming meetings

Birds NZ Manawatū 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.**

The meetings starts with a short introduction that amongst others have a regional bird sighting update and notices. At the end of the meeting there will be the option to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

Next meeting

12 February 2025

Talk: Pollen and the Nitrogen Requirements of the Lesser Double-Collared Sunbird, *Nectarinia chalybea*.

Nectarivorous birds typically are small, and have high basal metabolic rates. To meet their high energy needs, they spend a large proportion of their time foraging on nectar. However, they also require protein, vitamins, essential fatty acids, minerals, and trace elements. It is often overlooked how they obtain the protein that they need to survive and the effect on their foraging behavior. Nectar, pollen, and insects are all potential sources of protein that presents its own challenges. In this talk, Ian will discuss these issues together with research he conducted in South Africa to test whether pollen was a potentially viable source of protein for the lesser double-collared sunbird

Speaker: Ian van Tets from Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alaska Anchorage. Ian is originally from Australia, his work has taken him to South Africa, Belgium, Israel and Alaska (USA) – where he uses small birds and mammals to study links between their physiology and their ability to survive and thrive in their environment. Dr. van Tets is currently living in Palmerston North while continuing to work distance for the University of Alaska.



Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

12th March 2025, **Annual Meeting** (Financial status, Annual report to Council) and the talk: **Birds of the Ruahine**, Speaker: Chris Tuffley

9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July, 13th August, 10th September, 8th October, 12 November

Links to other regions' newsletters and programmes

South Auckland Newsletter - November: birdsnz.org.nz/news/south-auckland-newsletter/

Wellington Newsletter - December: birdsnz.org.nz/news/wellington-newsletter/

Auckland Programme Jan-Jul 2025: birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Auckland-Programme-Jan-Jul-2025.pdf

Otago Newsletter – Jan 2025: birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Otago-2501.pdf

News items:

Moult Workshop / 5 February: birdsnz.org.nz/news/bird-moult-workshop-5-february/

Bird Moult – unravelling the mystery: birdsnz.org.nz/news/bird-moult-unravelling-the-mystery/

Te Araroa birds – Interview with Dr Colin Miskelly: birdsnz.org.nz/news/te-araroa-birds/

Notices

2025 BirdsNZ Conference (see poster next page)

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.

Student members are encouraged to present their projects and apply for a Fledgling Fund Grant birdsnz.org.nz/awards-and-prizes/notornis-and-conference-awards/fledgling-grant/ by no later than 28 February.

Online registration and details are available at <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/nz-bird-conference/>.

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/>

Oceania Seabird Symposium (Auckland) birdsnz.org.nz/news/oceania-seabirds/

The Oceania Seabirds Symposium will now be held from 14-17 April 2025. Due to the ongoing political situation in New Caledonia the symposium will now be held in Auckland.



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 birds.nz.org.nz



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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 March 2025 issue: 26 February 2025

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

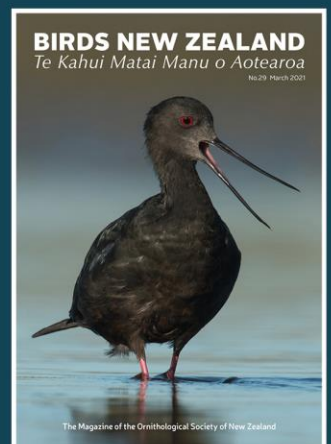
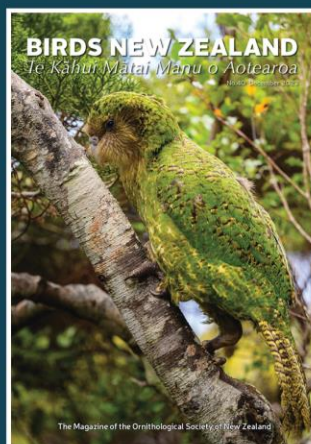
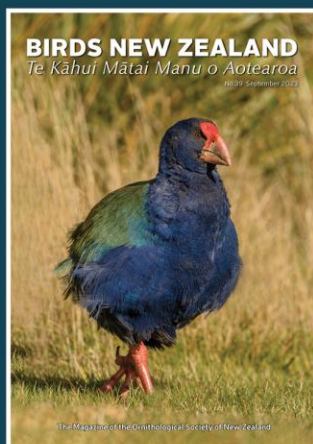
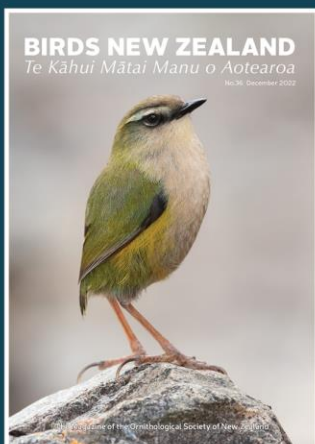
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

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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It costs \$90 a year, and for students it's just \$45 a year:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/donate/>

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