



BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter March 2025

- 🌀 From the Regional Representative
- 🌀 Bird sightings in Manawatu
- 🌀 Farewell to the Birds at Manawatū River estuary
- 🌀 Bird update Whanganui
- 🌀 Next meeting
- 🌀 Meeting dates for the rest of 2025
- 🌀 Links to other regions' newsletters
- 🌀 Notices
- 🌀 Health and safety
- 🌀 Contributions to future newsletters
- 🌀 Birds NZ Manawatū contacts



Fernbird photo by Chris Tuffley

From the Regional Representative

I have submitted our data from the Peter Schweigman Memorial Royal Spoonbill Colony and Nest Count, 2024/25 to Mary Thompson, who is the national coordinator. She emailed me back and told me that there were no colonies reported during the previous count, 10 years ago. So we have added four new Royal Spoonbill colonies to the known colonies in the country.

Our Bar-tailed Godwits are preparing for take off. Both at Manawatu estuary and Whanganui the Godwits are colouring. Farewell to the Godwits at Manawatu estuary is Saturday 15th March. Paul Gibson has given dates and times when it is best to see the Godwits at Whanganui River mouth.

The 2025 Birds New Zealand Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held in **Auckland** from **31st May-2nd June**.

I am still in the process of organizing speakers for coming meetings, so ideas are still welcome. If you are interested in leading a bird trip, please contact me.

Thank you to Chris Tuffley, Neil Haggarty and Paul Gibson for sending photos and material for the newsletter.

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 April issue is 26th March 2025.



Grey Warbler by Chris Tuffley

Last meeting 12th February 2025

Ian van Tets, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alaska Anchorage gave a very interesting and talk about: Pollen and the Nitrogen Requirements of the Lesser Double-Collared Sunbird, *Nectarinia chalybea*.

25 people came to hear the talk. Several had questions during and after the talk, there was a good discussion.

One of the questions Ian wanted to answer was whether pollen was a potentially viable source of protein for the lesser double-collared sunbird. His research from South Africa showed that it is very likely.

Bird sightings in Manawatū

By Niel Haggarty

Phil Battley reported hearing a fernbird and two Spotless Crakes at Pukepuke lagoon on 26th February. Spotless were also heard at Te Hakari wetland near Kuku Beach, Ohau.

A spotted dove was reported on Waicola Drive, Palmerston North by Wei-Hang Chua on the 23rd February.

There has been an unconfirmed report of five New Zealand Dotterels at Foxton.

At the Manawatu River estuary some of the Godwits are colouring up nicely.



Photo by Neill Haggarty

Farwell to the birds at Manawatu River estuary

From Kelvin Lane, on behalf of the Manawatu Estuary Trust

All friends of the Manawatu Estuary are welcome to our Manawatu Estuary, at Foxton Beach, on Saturday 15th March 2025 at 10.30am to farewell our migratory birds from the Manawatu Estuary.

We will be meeting at 10.30am before the high tide, by the viewing platform at the end of Dawick Street, Foxton Beach.

Viewing and photographic opportunities present themselves uniquely well because of the access and proximity to the birds. Spotting scopes giving viewing advantage will be available to all, making this a special experience everyone can enjoy.

Bird update Whanganui

from Paul Gibson

We have made a number of visits to Upokongaro, mostly in the evening. A couple of day visits to the café have yielded nothing, as far as Nankeen night herons go. One evening around 8 pm Jim and I had a number of birds showing including some birds that flew at sunset from the macrocarpa to the river quarking as they went, giving me a chance to photograph a bird in action.



The small group of godwits continue on the estuary with five male birds colouring up nicely, indicating their urge to migrate again next month. AJD has been very tolerant of me and one day even gave me a smile! AJD, and his friend of many years, Y-13477, are often together on the estuary, and they posed for me nicely. Several females are looking very pale, as they have a breeding plumage of their own, varying greatly in colour, from pale to reddish. The birds seem to have got used to my mobile hide on wheels.

No other arctic waders have been seen in the last two weeks, but there are large numbers of pied stilts present, including some hybrids. Jim Norris photographed a stilt almost all black, but we have not seen it again. Several paradise ducks have been found walking along the riverside, not a usual sight.

A couple of days ago I saw 100s of white-fronted terns sitting on the rocks out from the boat ramp. They come and go, some days there are none to be seen, and then next day 100s.



Godwit viewing times for March 2025

Whanganui River Estuary - at end of Beach Road

Date	High tide time	Tide height	Best viewing time
15 March 2025	11:48 am	2.9	10:00 am
16 March 2025	12:18 pm	2.9	10:30 am
17 March 2025	12:47 pm	2.8	11:00 am
18 March 2025	1:18 pm	2.7	11:45 am
19 March 2025	1:50 pm	2.6	12:45 am
20 March 2025	2:27 pm	2.5	1:45 pm
21 March 2025	3:12 pm	2.3	3:00 pm
22 March 2025	4:12 pm	2.2	4:00 pm
23 March 2025	5:27 pm	2.2	5:00 pm
24 March 2025	6:48 pm	2.2	4:00 pm onwards
25 March 2025	8:00 pm	2.3	4:00 pm onwards

Note: Heavy rainfall and strong winds can change times a little, so if in doubt arrive a little earlier than given times. AJD is expected to migrate, weather permitting, on, or around, 25 March, at about 5 pm.

Chris Tuffley's southern rock wren encounters

I was passing a small tarn while tramping the Dusky Track in Fiordland this summer when the softest of sounds brought me to a halt: a quiet "pss-pssip!".

I sat down, looked and listened. Could that be...???

It was! A pīwauwau | rock wren was bobbing up and down as it made its way around the edge of the tarn towards me. It came within a meter or two, looked at me sideways as I frantically snapped some photos, then flew off back to the far end of the tarn. And then I saw there was a second one - which also came over to check me out, before flying back off to the other end of the tarn, just like the first. Buzzing from the encounter I carried on, hurrying to catch up with my companions. South Island summer tramping birding goals unlocked!

And as if that wasn't enough...a week and a half later I had another four separate encounters with rock wren in the space of two days, while tramping in Aspiring National Park, all beginning with catching that quiet "pss-pssip!" and stopping and looking. Here's a photo from my closest encounter, on the track up to Lake Castalia in the north branch of the Wilkin River.



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 start with a short introduction that includes a regional bird sighting update and notices. At the end of the meeting there is the opportunity for all to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

Next meeting 12 February 2025

We will start out with Birds NZ Manawatū's Annual meeting (Financial status, Annual report to Council), which should not take too long. Then **Chris Tuffley** will talk about:

Birds of the Ruahine

During the 2019-2024 NZ Bird Atlas Chris gave himself the job of making sure there was good data coverage in his local mountain range, the Ruahine. This turned out to be fantastic motivation for lots of great tramping trips, and to fill in the Atlas effort map he walked many of the major tracks, ridges and river routes in the range with a camera and microphone, counting and photographing birds and recording their songs. Come along and see the sights and hear the sounds of the Ruahine, and find out what birds are there and just where in the range you might hear a robin or see a fernbird.



Chris Tuffley is a trumper, photographer and mathematician who became a birder too, through contributing to the NZ Bird Atlas.

Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

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

Links to other regions' newsletters

Waikato Newsletter – Feb 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Waikato-2502.pdf>

News items:

Horsfield's bronze cuckoo added to the NZ list:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/horsfields-bronze-cuckoo-added-to-the-new-zealand-list/>

Notices

2025 BirdsNZ Conference & AGM

The 2025 NZ Bird Conference & Annual General Meeting will be held in Auckland on King's Birthday weekend (31 May-2 June) at the Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel. See <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/nz-bird-conference-2025/> for details.

Professor Dianne Brunton (University of Auckland) and Matt Maitland (Senior Ranger Open Sanctuaries, Auckland Council) will be the plenary speakers. Her subject is "Highlights from 35 years of researching birdsong, behaviour, and conservation in New Zealand." His is a "20 year retrospective of Tāwharanui Open Sanctuary".

30 May 2025 (Friday)

18:00 – 19:00 Registration at Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel

31 May 2025 (Saturday) at Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel

08:00 – 09:00 Registration. Tea/coffee available

09:00 – 09:30 Opening

09:30 – 17:00 Scientific Day One

19:00 Informal Dinner

1 June 2025 (Sunday) at Novotel & IBIS Auckland Ellerslie Hotel

08:00 – 09:00 Registration. Tea/coffee available

09:00 – 15:00 Scientific Day Two

15:30 AGM and Awards

19:00 Conference Dinner

2 June 2025 (Monday) Field trip options

Tiritiri Matangi Island; Tawharanui Regional Park; Behind the Scenes at the Museum – bird collection; Ambury Regional Park; Pelagic trip to Mokohinau Islands.

There will also be the usual photo competition at the conference.

Notices continued

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

Health and safety

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@birdsanz.org.nz or phone 027 354 6010

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.”

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 March 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

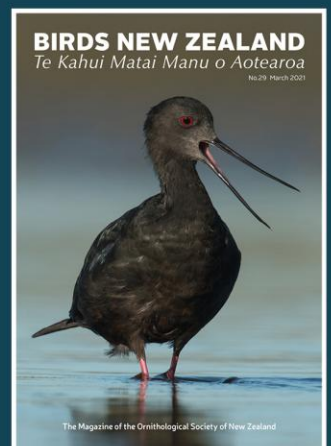
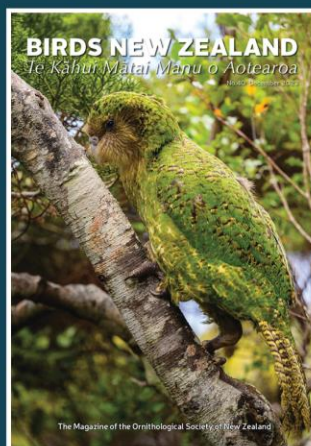
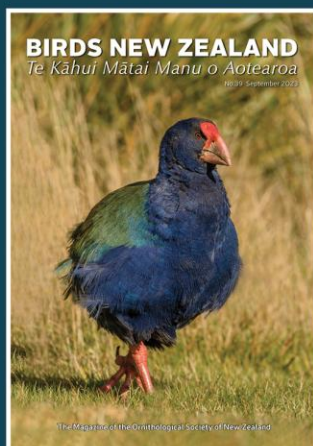
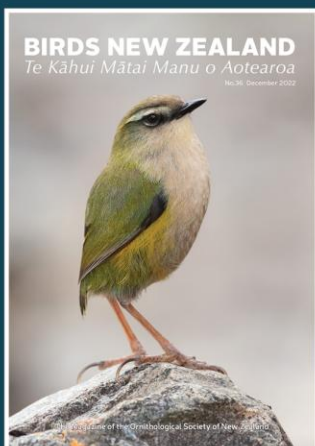
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

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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