

Out 'n' About

Newsletter of the Southland
Natural History Field Club

Meeting Thursday 9 December

This is our traditional BBQ evening. Daffodil Bay at 6pm. The Fieldclub will provide food, tea and coffee but you might feel like bringing other edible stuff as well.

TREE AND BIRD COMPETITION

We will divide into teams which will spend 30 minutes doing a bird list and a tree list – a tree being a plant five metres tall with a trunk 7.5cm thick, a bird being... well you can guess! A good chance to do some of the short walks as well.

What a wonderful opportunity to pay your sub at the same time!

Binoculars might be useful!

Phone Lloyd if you need transport or directions, 2130404

Fieldtrips:

Sunday 12 December – 9am start. Visit to the Clifden area. Lake, giant totara, riverbed. \$10 for driver. Phone Lloyd 2130404 if interested.

Saturday 18 December – 8am start. To the Remarkables Skifield and Lake Alta. \$15. Phone Lloyd if interested.

Weekend trip to Deep Cove, organised by Neil Robertson, walking the Wilmot Pass, overnight at Deep Cove Hostel. Possible dates 8-9 January 2011 to be confirmed.

Depart Manapouri at 0715 (check in at 0700), travel to West Arm on Real Journeys boat. Walk across Wilmot Pass road (21 km) with day packs. Long but fairly easy walking, climbing from 180m up to 670m and down to sea level. Perhaps time to do side tours at Mica Burn, Stella Falls, Old Doubtful Sound Track etc. Overnight bags etc can go across on bus. Overnight at Deep Cove Hostel, possible Kiwi spotting after dark!! Next morning walking trails at Deep Cove. 1145 bus back to West Arm, time to explore lower Spey Valley or Mica Burn again to look for Blue Duck, before we catch the 1530 boat back to Manapouri arriving at 1645.

Cost approx \$100. (\$75 transport \$25 hostel to be confirmed.) Need to take sleeping bag and pillow case plus food for lunches and evening meal (could do communal barbeque at Deep Cove)

Interested? Please let Neil know via email on Neilgrobertson@yahoo.co.uk by 18 December

Forest and Bird Programme

Te Rere full day penguin count in the Catlins. Saturday 11 December 2010

Two shifts 10am-4pm and 4pm-10pm. Contact Brian Rance rances@ihug.co.nz or ph 213 1161.

Hidden Secrets of South Invercargill. Tuesday 14 December 2010, 7.00pm

Meet at Kew Bush North Entrance. Leader Sheryll Ashton, ph 214 2319.

The lovely Matura Valley, let's keep it that way! Saturday 22 January 2011



Emperor penguin I had a note about New Zealand's sole recorded Emperor penguin in the Southland Times recently. It was found alive on Oreti Beach in 1967 (left). This prompted a response from Kerry Raymond of Wallacetown who said that about 1972 he saw one on the beach at Waikouaiti. Possible of course, but I suggested it was more likely a King penguin. Pity he didn't take a photo of it.

Flax flowering This year is a bumper year for all sorts of plants. I have seen above average flowering on *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, Native jasmine or *Parsonsia heterophylla*, lawyer or *Rubus schmidelioides* and kamahi *Weinmannia*

racemosa. Flowering is especially spectacular on the Prickly Spaniards in Mount Cook National Park (right). Also noted the abundant flowering of Porcupine scrub *Melicactus alpinus* which is very fragrant. It's a good year for flax but probably not quite as good as 2008. Last year was the poorest flowering I have ever seen. My statistics for flax flowers on my property are: 2008 – 99, 2009 – 1, 2010 – 102.

"Help, my wineberry is dying!" The plaintive cry of the bereaved gardener. Several times I have been told that the family wineberry, a picture of health and arborescent bliss, has suddenly lost its leaves and yielded up whatever passes for its soul. I ask how old it is. "It's only about 15." There's the answer, it's died of old age.. An old wineberry gets to about 30cm diameter in that time and then suddenly shuffles off.



Haldane Harbour Only two of us made the trip on 27 November. It drizzled a bit at first but turned out to be a very worthwhile day. We went right to the point at the northern side of Waikawa Harbour . There's an area there fenced off of Yellow-eyed penguin nesting but we didn't see any sign of them. The seaweeds around here are amazing. From the clifftop there is a good view south across Porpoise Bay. We collected oysters, mussels and cockles. On the return trip we did the loop track at Seaward Downs and another at Kingswood Bush at Woodlands. Seaward Downs has the best pongas *Dicksonia fibrosa* I have seen. The largest are around 50cm through the trunk (left).



What is a dog? According to Ambrose Bierce in the Devil's Dictionary...DOG. The Dog is a survival—an anachronism. He toils not, neither does he spin, yet Solomon in all his glory never lay upon a door-mat all day long, sun-soaked and fly-fed and fat, while his master worked for the means wherewith to purchase the idle wag of the Solomonic tail, seasoned with a look of tolerant recognition.





This picture (left) was sent in for identification. It's a curlew at Haldane Harbour. Apparently quite a regular resident there

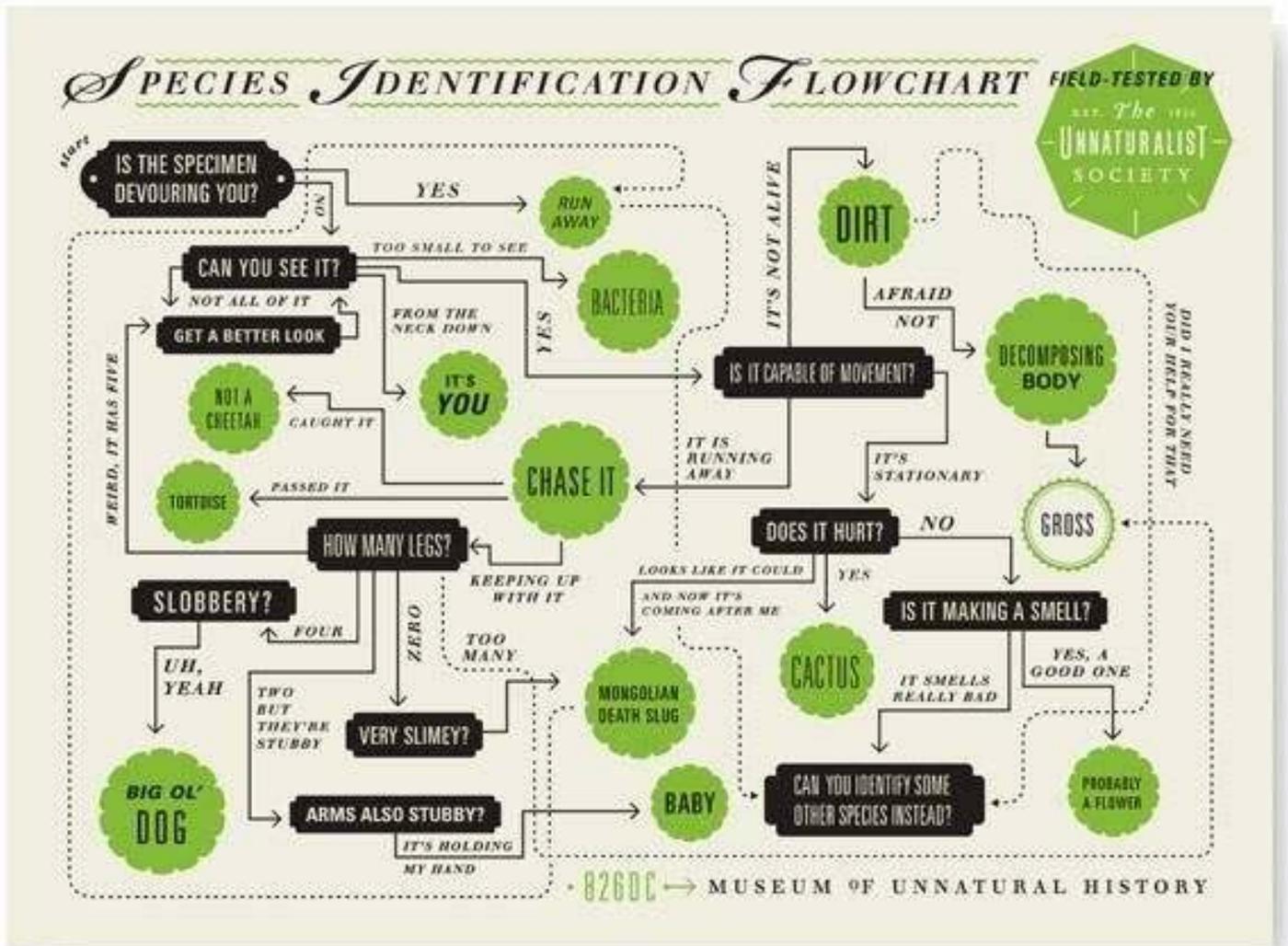


On the wader count at Awarua Bay on 6th November Phil Rhodes, Shawn Herron and Neil Robertson were lucky to

get great, if brief, views of a South Island Fernbird. Neil just had time to grab the camera and take a couple of shots.

Thrushes I've never seen so many thrushes! Anyone else experiencing thrushes as well?

Shining cuckoo One in my garden does up to 36 cooees before the final whiuuu. Perhaps it is actually 'whew' after the big effort.



Newsletter and Treasurer: Phil Rhodes 2144936 p.rhodes@xtra.co.nz
 Chairman: Lloyd Esler 2130404 esler@southnet.co.nz
 Secretary: Joanne Forbes 2162423

Future trips: Possibilities for the summer are Waipohatu River Walk, Wairaki Hut, Taieri Mouth and Key Summit.