



Out 'n' About

Newsletter of the Southland
Natural History Field Club

Vol 11 Issue No. 2 March 2011

Meeting Thursday 10 March 6pm

Trip to the Glenham Tunnel not far from Wyndham

The Glenham Tunnel is Southland's only rail tunnel. It is on farmland. Meet at the museum by 6pm. Bring a torch and gumboots

Coming up...

Fieldtrip: Sunday 20 March 9am Trip to do some of the Oreti River near Lumsden. Walk upriver. Expect to get wet up to... I dunno. Lunch, sunhat, parka etc. \$10 for driver

Fieldtrip: Saturday 2 April 1pm Dolamore Park Tracks near Gore. A variety of grades. Good views. \$5.

Forest and Bird: Special Outing: Saturday 26 March 2011 Wairaurahiri Jet Boat day trip. Special price to F&B members - \$150. Book with W-Jet at johan.joyce@wjet.co.nz. First in, first served basis. The Wairaurahiri River Experience with Johan Groters and Joyce Kolk

Rare visitor off Stewart Island Coast



Matt Jones, a nature guide on Stewart Island, was leading a pelagic trip on the east coast of Stewart Island to Wreck Reef (Big Reef) when he spotted a strange petrel which he thought was a White-naped Petrel (*Pterodroma cervicalis*) flying past the boat. He managed to take a few photos and these confirmed his sighting.

This bird was well out of its usual range. It breeds on Macauley Island in the Kermadecs as well as Philip Island off Norfolk Island; it may also nest on Vanuatu.

They have been seen during the summer months off Muriwai Beach, Gisborne and Hokianga Harbour, but

this bird is very far south of its usual range. OSNZ along with photos he took.

Matt is happy to share his photo with the field club and you can see what a very nice coloured petrel this is – shame we don't see them more often down south, but with global warming who knows? **PHIL RHODES**

Summer Wader Count: In inclement weather, bits of the wader count were done around Southland but the Shellbanks in the estuary haven't been done yet and these may be attempted this coming weekend 12-13 March. Interested in helping?

Photo shows oystercatchers hunkered down at Jock's Roost on 5 March.





Ulva Island Birds These photos were taken by Jack Olsta from Huntsville Texas in November 2010 on Ulva Island. Jack was amazed with the birdlife and wanted to share a few photos with us, he and his wife have visited New Zealand several times but this was their first visit to Stewart Island and Ulva. It will remain a special place for him and he hopes to return one day. (Stewart Island Robin on the left and a Weka chick on the right)

Field Club subscriptions

For those who have not yet paid their field club subscriptions, please pay in the next few weeks if you want to continue to receive the newsletter.

Even if you don't want to remain a member could you please advise us.

Send you payments to the treasurer, Phil Rhodes, 35 Lorn Street, Invercargill 9810

Field Club field trips

Photos from recent and past trips are available to view on the Invercargill Environment Centre's website just type in this link. http://www.iec.org.nz/g_fieldclub.html

Mavora Lakes On Saturday 26 February five of us drove to North Mavora Lake. It was a beautiful day and we walked for some distance up the side of the lake, then took the Mount Nicolas Road to where it crossed the Oreti River and explored the tussock country. A lot of plants were fruiting, especially the small heaths and the Yellow mistletoe growing in profusion on beech trees. Neil Coaley went fishing and caught his usual number of fish.



New Zealand Falcons on the Upper Waiau River.

When referring to habitat preferences, field guides often describe New Zealand Falcons as birds which inhabit the edges of forests. This is certainly true along a 20 km stretch of the upper Waiau River between Lake Te Anau and Lake Manapouri which follows the boundary of the Fiordland National Park. Over the last few years this has proven to be a reliable site to observe these amazing birds, with pairs nesting and successfully raising young at a number of sites. Since 2009 pairs have nested at

Supply Bay, Rainbow Reach (becoming notorious for attacking trampers on the Kepler track) and near the control gates at the southern end of Lake Te Anau.

This photo of an adult bird was taken at Supply Bay by a colleague, Douglas Thorne, in January

2011.



This season (2010-11) a pair of falcons took up residence at Queen's Reach adjacent to our section and they have been seen and/or heard daily since late October. During December adults could be heard and observed daily hunting over our paddocks, chasing mainly introduced species such as chaffinches, redpolls, yellowhammers and skylarks.

Around the last week of January a juvenile falcon was observed for the first time, still a bit clumsy and uncoordinated in flight and spending a lot of time on or close to the ground. It had not yet mastered the art of alighting on a fence post, but did manage to land on the back of one of our horses at one point. The horse didn't mind, he just carried on grazing! I also observed an episode where the juvenile tried a number of low swoops over a pair of rather bemused Paradise Shelducks. The ducks clearly didn't feel under threat; it was as if they somehow knew this was only an inexperienced youngster.

At about this time I witnessed the way in which young falcons are trained in the skills need to catch their own prey. Initially I heard the distant very clear call of an adult. The juvenile answered with a distinctive call (sometimes referred to as whining, although to me it sounded like a less refined, throatier, version of the adult call). Then the adult came in to view with a prey item in its talons. The juvenile, possibly having made visual contact, then took to the air rising quickly towards its parent. The adult then started to climb strongly on an upwardly curving flight path. Very soon the juvenile had reached a point perhaps 5-10 metres directly below the adult at which time both birds were climbing almost vertically. The prey was released and instantly caught by the juvenile, who then returned to the ground and devoured its meal. This became a familiar, almost daily, observation over the next 3 weeks.

Yellow-eyed penguin. Here is a pathology report from a penguin found on Porpoise Bay. You can see from this the value in keeping and reporting freshly dead birds as a potential warning of an epidemic or glitch in the food chain

Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences
PATHOLOGY REPORT

Submitter's Ref.:	Date Sent: 31/01/2011	Accession No.: 45899	
Species: Avian-WL (1)	Sex: Unknown	Age: Juvenile	Breed: Yellow Eyed
ID: No identification	At	Affected:	Dead: 1
Owner: Rosalind (Ros) Cole, DOC	Prev. Accn.:	Type: Post Mortem	

HISTORY

The body of this bird was found on 30/01/11 on Porpoise Bay in Southland. There had been strong seas and winds around this date. The submitter suspects starvation.

GROSS FINDINGS

Body weight 2.15kg, body condition score 1/6. The bird was a juvenile bird, smaller than an adult in size with some downy chick feathers still protruding from the adult plumage over the dorsum, although not compromising the waterproofing. There were no other significant findings on external examination.

There were significantly low reserves of body fat, including subcutaneous, visceral and coronary deposits. When the lungs were incised, foam and fluid was released. The lungs floated. There was moderate autolysis of the body. The gastrointestinal tract was empty except for the ventriculus which contained several small pebbles. The proventriculus and ventriculus contained a small amount of brown-black fluid, which coated the mucosa. Otherwise no significant abnormalities detected on examination of the internal organs.

HISTOPATHOLOGY

Multiple tissues were fixed for histopathology

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS

1) Starvation/emaciation

COMMENTS

The bird was emaciated, which may have been caused by direct starvation or may have been caused by an underlying disease process. Histopathology is pending to investigate for underlying disease.

File Nos.:

Students:

Date:

Pathologist: S Hunter / B Lenting

A new bird for the estuary? On 6 March John Taylor photographed a scaup amongst the mallards on the Sutton Lagoon, formally the rubbish dump. Scaups are almost always freshwater birds. They are seen sometimes on the fiords but this is the first I have seen on the estuary. They are quite common on lakes and large ponds throughout Southland.



Next instalment of The Rats and I

It's not good practice to name pets after the members of your family or to use the same name for more than one animal. I knew a household where the three dogs were called Charlie because the owners liked the name. It's just plain confusing! "Charlie, stop that!" One dog thinks, "right, I mustn't eat the newspaper", another thinks "I thought I was allowed to sleep by the heater" and the third thinks "Ok then, I'll just stop breathing if it will make you happy." Naming the rat after the child isn't good either. "Give Maddi some fresh pellets." "Maddi, have you set the table? – ee ee, ee ee!" "Maddi stinks, she needs scrubbed out." Remember Manuel and his 'Siberian Hamster' in Fawlty Towers? "Of course it's a rat, you have rats in Spain don't you or did Franco have them all shot?" The rat is named Basil which causes confusion with proprietor Basil Fawlty. Basil the rat might have made a better job of managing the establishment.

Mason Bay Anyone interested in a trip to Mason Bay, Stewart Island 14-15 May? Ferry to Oban, watertaxi to Freshwater and walk to Mason Bay. Kiwi-spotting in the evening. Sunday – Beach patrol, picked up by plane afternoon on 15 May 4pm. Probable cost around \$270 : (Water taxi \$50, Ferry \$66, Plane \$145)
Contact Lloyd Esler esler@southnet.co.nz

Doubtful Sound and Fiordland coast bird sightings October 2010 – February 2011. Neil Robertson

Below is a brief summary of bird sightings from the Real Journeys day cruise boat in Doubtful Sound and a coastal trip to Breaksea Island on 14-17 February.

South Island Brown Kiwi

3/11/2010 - single bird heard at Deep Cove in evening.

19/1/2011 - single male heard calling at 2.00pm in overcast conditions at Turn Point in Crooked Arm.

Fiordland Crested Penguin

Small numbers were seen daily between early October and mid December. A maximum of 8 was seen on 22/10 and 15/11 and a group of 7 on rocks at Nee Islets on 27/11. Last date seen before departure to Tasman sea was 17/12 (remarkably consistent with previous 3 years departure dates - 15/12 once and 16/12 twice). First adults were seen returning to moult on 13/1 with single birds seen on most days to 17/2. Larger numbers of fresh-plumaged birds were seen from 23/2 with a maximum of 9 on 25/2 and 11 on 28/2. Still present, moulting, on Breaksea Island on 14-16/2.

Little Penguin

Small numbers were seen most days between early October and February. A maximum of 15 seen on 2/1, other notable counts were 8 seen on 15/11, 7/12, 17/2 and 23/2. Single bird seen off shore on 14/2.

Antipodean Albatross

Single birds were seen at entrance of sound on 16/12 and 14/1.

New Zealand White-capped Albatross

Seen occasionally at entrance of sound. 24/11 (2), 18/12 (1), 14/1 (1), 15/1 (1), 23/2 (4), 28/2 (2).
Single bird offshore on 14/2.

Southern Buller's Albatross

Small numbers (1-4 birds) were seen on most days from mid November to end of January. Larger numbers were seen from early February with highest counts on 11/2 (12), 27/2 (12) and 1/3 (10).
Up to 20 birds seen between Hares Ears and Breaksea sound on 14/2, similar numbers on return trip on 17/2.

Westland Petrel

17/2/11 – 2 birds seen at entrance to Breaksea Sound

1/3/11 – single bird at entrance to Doubtful Sound

Buller's Shearwater

Five birds seen on 17/12 and 18/12 were the earliest records. Seen occasionally thereafter with 3-5 birds seen on various dates in late December, January and February. Three birds seen near Hares Ears on 17/2.

Sooty Shearwater

Seen daily from mid November. Maximum counts as follows: 15/11 (75), 30/12 (c. 220), 2/1 and 14/1 (c. 200), 26/2 and 27/2 (c. 500). 300+ seen between Hares ears and Breaksea on 14/2, c.60 seen on return on 17/2

Grey-backed Storm Petrel

Single bird zig-zagging in front of boat for a few minutes on 2/2, about 500m south of Marcaciones Point, Bauza Island.

New Zealand White-faced Storm Petrel

Single bird in front of boat for a few minutes on 14/1, about 1500m south of Nee Islets at entrance of sound.

Australasian Gannet

Seen daily in small numbers. Maximum count of 40 on 6/12. C.30 seen between Hares ears and Breaksea on 14/2 and c20 on 17/2.

Little Shag

Small numbers present near Rolla Island with 1-2 seen on various days from October to February.

Pied Shag

Seen daily around the fiord, with biggest population being the breeding colony on the Shelter Islands where 60-80 birds are normally present.

Black Shag

Small numbers present near Elizabeth Island with 1-2 seen on various days throughout period.

Spotted (Blue) Shag

Single bird. seen occasionally between December and February, appeared to have taken up residence with Pied Shags on the Shelter Islands – only ever seen on rocks though; never in trees!!

A group of 5 birds that flew past the boat (heading SE) in Malaspina Reach on 27 February was the highest number I have ever seen in this area.

Small numbers (3-5) seen in Breaksea Sound between 14/2 and 17/2.

Reef Heron

Three birds seen on rocks on the Inner Gilbert Islands, Breaksea Sound on 16/2. Single bird on Shelter Islands, Doubtful Sound on 26/2. Is this species extending its range north along the Fiordland coast?

Paradise Shelduck

Seen daily – a number of pairs at various locations in Doubtful Sound.

New Zealand Scaup

Up to nine birds seen regularly in Deep Cove and Rolla Island in Doubtful Sound. Present throughout October to early January, but not seen since 13/1.

Western Weka

Seen most days on Wilmot Pass road at various locations between West Arm and Deep Cove. Good numbers of chicks successfully fledged, including two clutches from a nest under the skipper's flat at Deep Cove. Clearly the intensive stoat trapping along the Wilmot pass road is having an effect.

Variable Oystercatcher

Seen daily in many locations in Doubtful Sound.

Arctic Skua

Very few sightings this season, perhaps due to lower numbers of white-fronted terns. Single bird seen flying south across entrance on 17/12. Two birds observed chasing terns on 20/2 and on 2/3 two birds, one pale phase one dark phase, seen at end of Thompson Sound.

Southern Black-backed Gull

Very common, seen daily throughout fiord. Large numbers breed on islands in Lake Manapouri.

Red-Billed Gull

Very common, seen daily throughout fiord. Small numbers breed. Small colony observed, with chicks, at base of steep rock walls in Crooked Arm, Doubtful Sound.

Black-billed Gull

Small numbers (up to 5 birds) seen in inner parts of fiord, Hall Arm and Deep Cove. Earliest record was on 13/1 seen occasionally through to end of February.

White-fronted Tern

Very low numbers this season. First record was 12 birds on 14/11, with small groups seen occasionally for remainder of year. Starting to build up during February with a maximum of 78 birds on 2/3. No evidence of breeding this season. (in 2008/9 – 160+ pairs on Shelter Islands, in 2009/10 – 15+ pairs on Nee Islets). At sea on there were approx 30 on 14/2 and 50 on 17/2.

New Zealand Pigeon

Seen daily between West Arm and Deep Cove and at various locations along fiord. Flocks started to appear in early February. Highest counts, 22 on 2/2, 20 on 25/2 and 30 on 2/3.

Kea

Seen daily in small numbers (up to 4). Usual locations are West Arm, Wilmot Pass look out and Deep Cove.

South Island Kaka

Seen or heard occasionally. Small population seem to roost at Deep Cove where I saw 12 birds flying in on evening of 27/11. Also seen on Bauza Island (4 on 1/3) near entrance of fiord.

Yellow-crowned Parakeet

Occasionally heard when boat engines are switched off. Two on Bauza Island on 1/3.

Morepork

Resident at Deep Cove with 2-3 birds heard on most nights.

Breaksea Island (14-16/2) was fantastic, as usual for small forest birds, with good numbers of New Zealand Pigeons, Grey Warbler, Bellbird, Tui, South Island Saddleback, South Island Tomtit, South Island Robin and Yellowheads

Neil Robertson



For sale South Island Birds \$10 and Natural Otatara \$5

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