

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FAR NORTH REGION OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

DETLEF'S DELIBERATIONS

Your new R.R has at last resumed the production of the Newsletter for the Far North Group. In saying 'quarterly', this may be optimistic & producing newsletters this often will depend on enthusiasm & input from our members.

We in the Far North have always had a rather small, sparse, but dedicated membership & hopefully we can between us increase the awareness of the Society & recruit new members.

There are a number of ways in which we can do this:

- Produce an interesting, informative & not too technical newsletter with plenty of events.
- Work with other groups, companies & societies with similar interests like Forest & Bird, the Puketi Trust, Kiwi Wildlife Tours, the New Zealand Kiwi Foundation & the local Landcare Groups & local offices of DOC.
- Encourage our friends & workmates who show an interest in birds to join our activities.
- Bring birding into conjunction with other leisure pursuits like rambling, sailing & boating.

The Far North Regional Officers are now as follows:

Regional Representative: Detlef Davies

'Waipapa Lagoon', Landing Road,
Kerikeri

Tel No: 09 407 3874 (home)
09 407 0178 (work)

Email: detlefdavies@yahoo.com

Regional Recorder: Detlef Davies

Treasurer: Isabella Godbert
Waipapa Road West, Kerikeri

Tel No: 09 407 8058
Email: godbert@xtra.co.nz

RECENT EVENTS

Far North Region AGM at Carol & Detlef's house, Kerikeri, 6th May 2004 Minutes

Meeting commenced at 7 pm.

Present: Anthea Goodwin – acting RR, Isabella Godbert – treasurer, Detlef & Carol Davies, Ian & June Wilson, Kerry & Jane Walshe, Lynette & Bill Smith, Russell Thomas, Derry Godbert.

Apologies: Bill Campbell, John Dawn, Dan O'Halloran, Lindsay & Helen Alexander.

Minutes – those of last year's AGM were not available.

Acting R.R. report – Anthea read out her report – received with thanks.

Treasurer's report – Isabella stated that there is \$229.38 in the bank & the sum of \$230 will be coming soon from OSNZ. Isabella moved that the report be accepted, Anthea seconded – all agreed. She moved that a donation be sent to Laurie & Alison Howell as they had done a considerable amount of travelling for the atlas. Russell moved that \$50 worth of petrol vouchers be sent, seconded Isabella – all agreed.

Election of officers:

Regional Representative – Isabella moved that Detlef Davies be R.R., seconded Russell – all agreed.

Treasurer – Anthea moved that Isabella continue as Treasurer, seconded Detlef – all agreed.

Regional Recorder, Southern Bird contributor, newsletter editor – Anthea moved that Detlef take on these jobs, seconded Isabella. A discussion was held about these positions, Detlef accepted – all agreed.

Atlas Project Update.

Anthea stated it was the last year for Atlas counts. She

will let people know of any squares needing a visit and reported that there would be extra time in the summer for any squares not visited.

Calendar of events. Anthea handed round a provisional calendar of events for the year.

National wader count. Anthea said that we had been asked to join in the national wader count in late June & she will ask for help nearer the time.

5 minute counts. Ian Wilson said he would like to extend Steve McManus's bird counts in the forest and do the untrapped area. The count will be in November and there will be a training day nearer the time.

Kiwi monitoring. Ian stated that more was needed in Puketi – people able to help are asked to contact him. He will keep data locally as well as passing it on to DOC as it is often difficult to access from DOC records.

Bay of Islands Restoration Project.

Lynette Smith reported on the Restoration Project. She said she had been having meetings with DOC and the Rawhiti Marae & will be including FNDC & Regional Council representatives; there is also survey work being done with Auckland University & Northland Polytechnic students. She stated that DOC has to work with community wishes for projects but they are short of money to fund them.

The meeting ended at 8 pm. *Isabella Godbert*

OSNZ Conference & AGM, Oamaru, Friday 4th – Sunday 6th June 2004

For my first job as R.R I attended this Conference where I met most of the other R.Rs, members of the Council & other prominent members of the Society. The R.Rs meeting on the Friday raised 3 issues worth mentioning here:

- It was considered that the Classified Summarised Notes which regularly appear in 'Notornis' should be incorporated in a separate annual bird report as a supplement to 'Notornis' as they form an important record worthy of a publication in their own right.
- It was discussed how the Society could help Birdlife International in identifying important bird areas of the world by considering any sites in New Zealand where globally endangered species occur. In our area we should consider the New Zealand Dotterel & some local breeding seabirds like Black & Cook's Petrel where world populations are confined to a few small islands.
- Leading on from this, some regions are producing a Locality Guide to their areas which apart from informing visitors to the area where less common birds can be found, may also help to protect the sites from development. The Wairarapa Group's Guide is already available &

it would be good if Far North could produce a similar guide. It should be possible to get funding for this.

On Saturday Chris Robertson sent most of us out into the chilly but sunny surrounds of Oamaru for atlassing to assist with the final months of the project. Some of us returned in time to see the parades of both Yellow-eyed & Blue Penguins at the sites close by.

Sunday was Scientific Day when at least 15 speakers entertained us with short illustrated talks on a variety of avian topics. It was also a chance to socialise.

June – July. Kiwi Monitoring

Several members have taken part in these. From personal experience on 3 evenings listening for 2 hours at sites close to State Highway 10 & in Puketi Forest, we still have a healthy population of Kiwis. Results of surveys are available from Greg Blunden on Aroha Island, from the local Landcare Groups & from DOC.

26th – 27th June Wader Count, Parengarenga Harbour.

7 of us had a glorious day here on the Saturday & results are set out in the chart on page 5. On Sunday the wet & windy weather prevented any further counting in the other areas which we had hoped to survey as well.

2nd July Galapagos Slide Show. 15 of us attended this indoor event (including some non-members). "Detlef showed a selection of slides that gave an interesting perspective of the varied landscapes of these islands, accompanied by a vivid commentary describing the wildlife that had adapted to areas ranging from totally barren to lush vegetation. One outstanding feature for photographers visiting the Galapagos would appear to be the ability to get close enough to the wildlife to obtain excellent photographs - a wide range of birdlife, lizards, seals and many other species."

Russell Thomas

10th - 11th July Far North Pelagic from Houhora Harbour

Ian Wilson & I went on this very enjoyable weekend. Chris Gaskin from Kiwi Wildlife Tours produced the report on pages 6 & 7.

21st July Ian Wilson's Antarctica Slide Show.

Several members attended Ian's event organised for Forest & Bird & enjoyed a wonderful display of pictures of this awe-inspiring place, not only of penguins & marine mammals but also showing the history of the early explorers. Ian was fortunate enough to land on many of the subantarctic islands & to get as far south as any boat can go.

The Atlas Scheme

Many thanks for the forms you have sent in. We are now nearing the end of our 5 years which will finish on 30th November with the end of the spring period. I expect to hear from the co-ordinator soon, as to which

squares still need to be covered, so if you feel you could help out with an extra one, please let me know.

At present we still need Sq. 46 Kaeo & Sq. 81 Kawakawa / Moerewa for the winter period. Any offers?

After that any squares which have never been visited can be covered next summer, before the end of February. More of that later.

It's not too late to hunt out old records for the last 5

years of any odd sightings, breeding records, etc. Just let me know details, locality & date.

Let's go for it!

Anthea.

Anthea Goodwin

Phone: 09 406 1533

Email: bushcrank@actrix.co.nz

Beach Patrols

Results of patrols at 90 mile Beach & Karikari from January to July 2004 are set out on pages 4 & 5. For dates of future patrols see Programme.

RECENT SIGHTINGS (April – July)

New Zealand Storm Petrel.

Although none seen by members during this period, a few of this newly rediscovered bird were recorded on Kiwi Wildlife Tours' recce to the sea off Houhora in May. We wonder where they breed.

Chris Gaskin et al

Cattle Egret

One at Pupuke on 29th April & 8 at Unahi Road, Awanui on 25th April.

Anthea

Australasian Bittern.

One flushed from dyke near Dick Ulrich Road on Karikari Peninsular on 15th May.

Detlef, Carol & Anthea, John & Dorothy Geale

Royal Spoonbill

115 at the Unahi Road roost, Awanui on 15th May, 195 there on 16th July. 172 at Te Hapua (Parengarenga) on 26th June. Also 6 birds seen in the Kerikeri Inlet throughout July & a report just in of 'lots' in mangrove tree at bottom of Blacks Road.

Detlef, Carol, Anthea, Russell et al.

Grey Plover

One on Kokota Sandspit on 26th June during wader count.

Detlef & Carol

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

3 feeding on pecan nuts in tree at Diggers Valley on 20th July.

Wendy Sporle

Kaka

One heard on the Takahue / Raiatea track on 28th April.

Dave Pankhurst & his group

One probably heard below Whakaangi (Berghan Point) one May evening.

Wendy Sporle

Long-tailed Cuckoo One flew into Lindsay's window in Russell on 19th April (luckily it recovered).

Lindsay Alexander

In late May there was a report of a **Great-billed Heron** in the Parengarenga area, seen by local, knowledgeable people, but only over a couple of days & not subsequently. I have not yet seen a description & there is no photo. This seems an unlikely occurrence but then if an Ancient Murrelet can reach England from NW Canada, well who knows?

Please send a note of your interesting sightings to me at any time, preferably promptly for anything really unusual; a short email or even a phone call would be welcome.

PROGRAMME

Sunday 15th August. Crake-watch. Anthea will try to find us a **Spotless Crake** or 2 with the help of a tape. A chance to see a bird which eludes us most of the time & perhaps a **Fernbird** could be persuaded to show itself too. Meet at **Taipā Shopping Centre** at 10 am. Contact **Anthea Goodwin** on 09 406 1533.

Friday 27th August. Prince Edward Islands & the Pack-Ice. Detlef's slide show of a special pelagic trip in November 2002. Landing Road, Kerikeri, 7.30 p.m

Sunday 19th September Walk. By now Shining Cuckoos should be around in good numbers so let's do a walk in the Kerikeri area & find some. An opportunity to introduce friends to the pleasure of birding. Details nearer the time.

Sunday 3rd October Trip to Moturua Island. We hope to get a boat to leave us on this bird-rich island for the day & will be approaching Fullers in Paihia but any boat-owners among you who would like to offer their craft for the day are asked to make contact. New Zealand Robin & Tomtit are possible here. More details to follow nearer the time.

Friday 8th October Members slides & next programme. I am happy to have this meeting at my home but will be looking for material from the rest of you by way of slides & ideas for the ensuing few months.

Weekend 16th – 17th October New Zealand Dotterel Census. The north of the North Island has 60% of the world population of this species & this is to be the 5th census. We need a lot of people to cover all the sites & hope for your support. Contact Richard Parrish on 09 436 1988 or email: rparrish@doc.govt.nz

Fri – Sun 19th – 21st November Far North Pelagic from Houhora. Following the success of previous trips, this one is overnight & promises to be excellent. Contact Chris Gaskin or Karen Baird of Kiwi Wildlife Tours on 09 422 2115, email: chris@kiwi-wildlife.co.nz

Beach Patrols. These are scheduled for the following dates:
 90 mile beach: **14th Aug., 11th Sept., 9th Oct., 6th Nov., 4th Dec.**
 Karikari: **28th Aug., 25th Sept., 23rd Oct., 20th Nov., 19th Dec.**
 Contact Isabella Godbert 09 407 8058 or John Dawn 09 407 8658

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|--|-------------------------|
| BEACH PATROLS, JANUARY TO JULY 2004 | <i>Isabella Godbert</i> |
|--|-------------------------|

90 Mile Beach

| MONTH | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| DATE | 28th | 15th | 14th | 18 th | 8th | 5th | 11th |
| DISTANCE (kms.) | 25 | 25 | 25 | 32 | 32 | 23 | 25 |
| Wandering Albatross | | | | 1 | | | |
| Shy Mollymawk | | | | | | | 1 |
| Yellow-nosed Mollymawk | | | 1 | | | | |
| Grey-headed Mollymawk | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Black-browed Mollymawk | | | | 1 | | | |
| Buller's Mollymawk | | | | | | | 2 |
| Light-mantled Sooty Albatross | | | | | | 1 | |
| Southern Giant Petrel | | | | | | 1 | |
| Buller's Shearwater | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | | |
| Sooty Shearwater | 4 | | | 1 | 5 | | 1 |
| Short-tailed Shearwater | 1 | | | | 3 | | 1 |
| Flesh-footed Shearwater | | 1 | | | | | |
| Fluttering Shearwater | 1 | 1 | 5 | | 6 | | |
| Hutton's Shearwater | | | 1 | | | | |
| Common Diving Petrel | | | | | 1 | | |
| Grey-faced Petrel | 1 | | | | 3 | | |
| Mottled Petrel | | | 1 | | | | |
| White-headed Petrel | | | | 1 | | | |
| Blue Penguin | 13 | 5 | 31 | | 1 | | |
| Australasian Gannet | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Pied Shag | | | 1 | | | | |
| Southern Black-backed Gull | 3 | 21 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Red-billed Gull | | 1 | | | | | |
| Caspian Tern | | 1 | | | | | |
| Total | 26 | 35 | 46 | 11 | 25 | 5 | 11 |

Karikari Peninsular

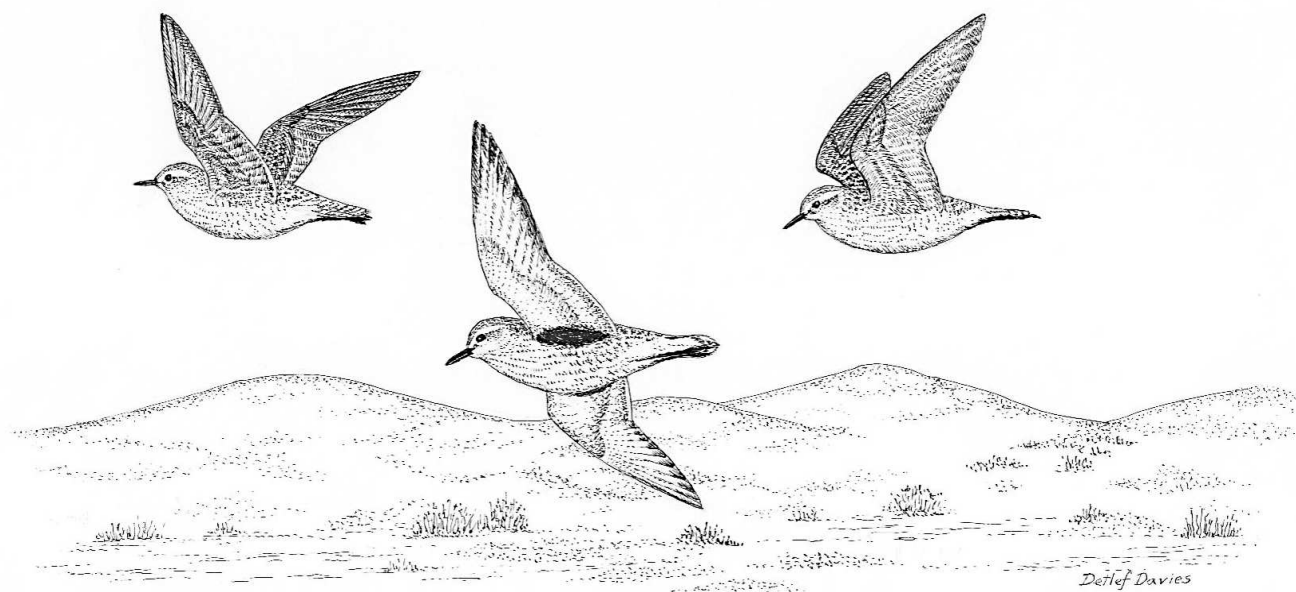
| MONTH | 4th APRIL | 2nd MAY | 31 st JULY |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| DISTANCE (Kms.) | 26 | 26 | 26 |
| Wandering Albatross | | | 1 |
| Southern Giant Petrel | | | 1 |
| Buller's Shearwater | 1 | | |
| Short-tailed shearwater | | 1 | |
| Fluttering Shearwater | | 4 | |
| Common Diving Petrel | | 1 | |
| Fairy Prion | | 1 | |
| Grey-faced Petrel | | 1 | |
| Blue Penguin | 2 | 1 | |
| Australasian Gannet (ad.) | 3 | 2 | |
| Pied Shag | | 2 | |
| Little Shag | | 1 | |
| Southern Black-backed Gull | 1 | 1 | |
| Red-billed Gull | | 1 | |
| Total | 7 | 16 | 2 |

Patrollers: J Dawn, B Couper, I & D Godbert, C MacDiarmid, P Gardiner.

WADER COUNT at PARENGARENGA HARBOUR

Date: 26th June 2004. **Weather** dry and sunny. **Team:** Anthea Goodwin, Ian Wilson, Lynette & Bill Smith, Dave Pankhurst, Detlef & Carol Davies, Roger Cawte (boatman).

| | Te Hapua | Paua South | Paua North | Kokota Spit | Ngaramu Point | Ahiaruhe Shellbank | Total |
|------------------------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| Pied Shag | 6 | | | | | 1 | 7 |
| Little Shag | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| White-faced Heron | 6 | 19 | 13 | | | | 38 |
| Reef Egret | | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| Royal Spoonbill | 172 | | | | | | 172 |
| S I Pied Oystercatcher | 45 | | 450 | | | 2 | 497 |
| Variable Oystercatcher | | | | 10 | 4 | 40 | 54 |
| Pied Stilt | 100 | 3 | | 68 | | 200 | 371 |
| New Zealand Dotterel | | | | 13 | | | 13 |
| Banded Dotterel | 13 | | | 47 | | | 60 |
| Wrybill | 6 | | | 61 | | | 67 |
| Spur-winged Plover | 1 | | 3 | | | | 4 |
| Turnstone | 4 | | 4 | 8 | | | 16 |
| Knot | | | 5 | | | | 5 |
| Asiatic Whimbrel | | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | 20 | | | 154 | | 40 | 214 |
| Black-backed Gull | 30 | | | 45 | 2 | 20 | 97 |
| Red-billed Gull | 10 | | | 2 | | 2 | 14 |
| Caspian Tern | 30 | | | 2 | | 1 | 33 |
| Pacific Golden Plover | | | | 4 | | | 2 |
| Grey Plover | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Red-necked Stint | | | | 10 | | | 10 |



Grey Plover with Pacific Golden Plovers

FAR NORTH PELAGIC

Saturday 10 July

A group of us - Alan Emmerson, Derek Bettsworth, Gillian Vaughan, Ian Southey, Ian Wilson, Detlef Davies, Wendy Hare, Nigel Milius, Arun and Chris Gaskin - rendezvoused at Houhora on Friday night. The aim was to head out from Houhora and try a couple of the locations east of North Cape where we'd struck gold in May. But after a discussion with our skipper Murray that night it was clear we weren't going to get out Saturday with 40kns SE and a huge sea running - about the worst possible conditions for that stretch of the coast. We'd allowed for a Sunday backup day so opted for stalking some of the local birding places, gecko hunting and a bit of a tiki tour of the Far North: Mount Camel station with its superb east-facing beaches, Parengarenga Harbour (Te Pua Point), Cape Reinga and Tupotupotu Bay.

Something like 45 species seen during the day with the highlight probably the high-tide roost at Te Pua Point - esp. the big flock of banded dotterel spread across a couple of paddocks. Alan picked up 5 whimbrels from his campervan. Ian's gecko hunting became addictive. Pleasant wanderings but frustrating - fine day apart from the wind and the big sea. The wind died completely that evening and the sea looked like it would flatten, so with the promise of getting out the next day it was down to the pub for beers, a meal and watching the Pacific Islanders give the ABs a good run for their money.

Sunday 11 July

Calm conditions clear sky, stunning morning. Left Houhora dock at 7.45AM. SST 14C at the Heads. However, once we'd rounded Mount Camel and were out in the bay it was clear a big swell was still rolling in. But we were committed and started heading ENE to keep in the protection of Moturoa Islands for as long as possible. Soon picked up 100s of Fluttering Shearwaters and 10s Diving Petrels with the occasional gannet. Also, a solitary Buller's Shearwater. Noted the amount of fish life below the feeding flocks of Fluttering Shearwaters (on the sounder).



NZ Pipit at Cape Reinga

Photo: Detlef Davies

Also picked up a couple of Blue Penguins. Further out starting adding Fairy Prions in increasing numbers. At the 100m line picked up the first albatrosses - White

capped Albatross. SST was up to 15.9C. Noticeable that the Fluttering Shearwaters and Diving petrels dropped away by this point. From here to the 200m line: Fairy Prions 10s but scattered in little groups; Cape Petrel, another White-capped Albatross; but fairly quiet.

By this time the wind was up a little (SE 5-10 kns) but the sea was massive, we were clear of the Moturoa Islands and Cape Karikari and open to the SE swell.

From 225m (SST 16.6C) we made a few legs running with the sea and zig-zagged out towards our target location to make for a gentler ride and ease a couple of turbulent tummies. It was a bit unfortunate that it meant it took longer to get out to where we wanted to be but it was worth the easier ride. Most of us managed to enjoy our lunch.

In terms of birds still quiet with a handful of Cape Petrels, Fairy Prions, NZ Black-browed (Campbell) Albatross, Giant Petrel and a couple of Little Shearwaters before picking up our first Grey-faced Petrel. From previous trips we'd learnt that G-f Ps would be out towards the edge of the shelf at this time of day and are quite a good indicator for picking up other interesting birds.

We reached our chumming location just after lunch. SST 17.7C. The depth when we started chumming was just over 700m. With the wind and sea coming from slightly different directions we had to settle for a very quiet idle into the sea while chumming which, while not ideal, worked well on the day.

It wasn't long before we started to bring in birds.

Birds seen while chumming:

- 5+ NZ Black-browed (Campbell) Albatross
- 5+ Black-browed Albatross
- 4 White-capped Albatross
- 1 Salvin's Albatross
- 1 Snowy
- 1 Gibson's
- 5 Wandering (most likely Gibson's with nothing standing out to be absolutely certain)
- 10-20 Grey-faced Petrels
- 10-20 Fairy Prions
- 10+ Cape Petrels
- 2 Giant Petrel - one close enough to ID as a Southern Giant Petrel

Chummed until about 3.30PM before starting back in with a very pleasant ride more-or-less with the sea. Great viewing from the foredeck (very much Derek's haunt) with some Little Shearwaters coming close across the bow. Good to have them neatly separated from Fluttering Shearwaters - the latter being predominantly in-shore along with Diving Petrels. For the rest of ride it was basically a rerun of the birds seen on the way out but in reverse order. We were back in to Houhora Harbour right on dusk with a great sunset. While it was clear it would be hard to match in one day what we'd achieved over two and half days last

time (21-24 May 2004) it was a great to get out on the water. It does mean in future we'll be organising some



Wandering Albatross Photo: Detlef Davies

weekend trips from Houhora with the possibility of going north and east of North Cape and up to the Three Kings (Late November or early December, late January and March).

For anyone interested we'll post dates of these cost-shared trips on our website.

Chris Gaskin

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This Newsletter is produced by Detlef & Carol Davies with kind help & contributions from Anthea Goodwin, Russell Thomas, Isabella Godbert & Chris Gaskin. This is our first effort & comments from the readership are welcome.