

# *Out 'n' About*

Newsletter of the Southland  
Natural History Field Club

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Chairman: Lloyd Esler 2130404 [esler@southnet.co.nz](mailto:esler@southnet.co.nz)

Secretary: Joanne Forbes 2162423

**Meeting Thursday 9 June 7.30**

**at the Hearing Association meeting rooms,  
126 Leet Street**

**Committee meeting 7pm**

**Kokako Research**

**Glenn Brown**

**Fieldtrip this Sunday afternoon 12/6 Waituna**

**Lagoon walkways 1pm at the museum**



Coming up...

**Beachwalk in September** – our traditional stroll from Riverton to the main entrance of Oreti  
**Mason Bay** Anyone for a visit to Mason Bay? Possibly Labour Weekend

**Wairaurahiri** Any starters for a day on the Wairaurahiri? Cross Lake Hauroko by jetboat,  
down the river to the sea, visit Waitutu Lodge and back up the river.

**Visiting naturalists** In November the Fieldclub will be helping with two visiting groups.  
These are OSNZ from Dunedin, down on the weekend of 12/13 November, and the  
Chinchilla Naturalists Club from Queensland which is here from 16 November for a few  
days. Most of their time will be on Stewart Island but we should be able to provide them  
with a suitable evening's entertainment and a fieldtrip around lower Southland as part of  
their visit. Suggestions welcome.

**Free Plant Propagation Days:** - Native Plants from cuttings 10 and 17 June 10am-noon at  
the Southland Community Nursery [www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz](http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz)

Book with Chris Rance - [rances@ihug.co.nz](mailto:rances@ihug.co.nz)

## **Forest and Bird meeting**

**Darwin's finches and other Galapagos highlights** with Forest and Bird's Southern Field  
Officer Sue Maturin who spent three months there with partner Graham Loh studying  
mangrove finches and exploring the wonderful Galapagos islands.

Tuesday 14 June 7:30pm Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall 61 King Street Windsor

**"Let me tell you bout the birds and the . . . butterfly!"**

It's been an exciting month for OSNZ members with Glenda Rees taking some stunning photos of a Grey-tailed Tattler at Cow Island in Awarua Bay; it was in breeding plumage and could be the same bird that has been seen over several years at this location.

Glenda also took some photos of NZ Dotterels, Bar-tailed Godwits and at Riverton she photographed a Turnstone that had an orange alpha flag attached to its leg. Further investigation showed that it had been caught at Barwon Heads not far from Geelong in Victoria and had been fitted with a geolocator on April 16, 2010. Unfortunately there was little data recorded and it was presumed to be faulty and the bird was recaptured and the device removed in January, 2011. Much to the delight of the Australians (and Southlanders) this bird turned up at Riverton where Glenda duly took the photo and added a little more

information to the history of this bird.

The photos taken of the NZ Dotterels at Awarua Bay also showed some of them with discoloured colour bands and one or two with just metal bands. The birds were banded approximately 12 years or more ago. (*Thanks to Glenda for allowing us to print these*)

The other exciting news was the sighting of a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike at Horseshoe Bay on Stewart Island. Matt Jones heard about the bird and managed to find it as he was just about to give up. He watched it feeding on a stick insect as it flew into some gum trees. The bird was a juvenile and is possibly the 16<sup>th</sup> bird to be reported from New Zealand, it is the second from Stewart Island as one was reported in 2001, there have also been two sightings from Invercargill in 1870 and 1976. It is thought some juveniles and adults birds get caught

up in bad weather and stray to New Zealand in autumn and spring.

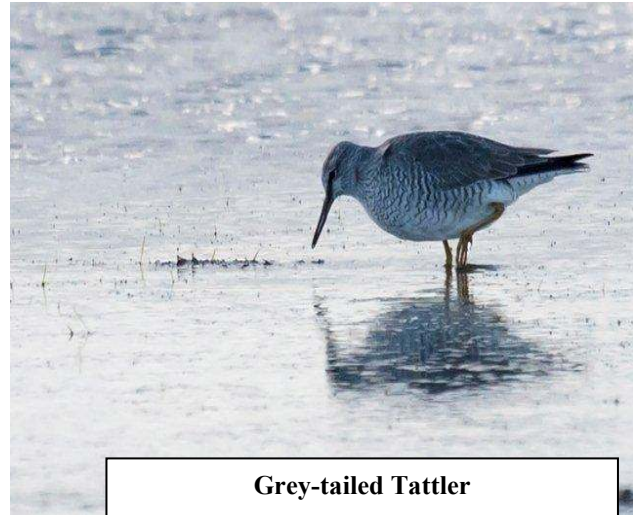
We hope to have a photo in the next Field Club newsletter.

If you would like to become a member of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand just contact Neil Robertson, Lloyd Esler or Phil Rhodes or you can download a membership form from the website

[www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz).



New Zealand Dotterel



Grey-tailed Tattler

### Yellow Admiral Butterfly

Last weekend I found this butterfly in the old vegetable garden



flitting from one part to another never really settling, at last it decided to bask in the sun on the wall. As you can see it is looking a bit worse for wear but then again it is nearly winter. Native to New Zealand but also found in Australia, it is common in summer and autumn and hibernates in winter. The butterfly's Maori name Kahu Kowhai means yellow cloak.

**Field Club outing photos are available to view on the Invercargill Environment Centre's website as well as Lloyd's page. Go to [www.iec.org.nz](http://www.iec.org.nz)**

**The field club has a number of books available for members to borrow, see Lloyd or Phil if interested.**

Omaui in 2010 has joined the beach (right) and now forms the outer arm of a lagoon. In all probability the rocky shore will be buried in sand and Omaui will be a sandy beach. This is a natural process which occurs on an irregular cycle and every few decades the beach loses its sand, only to regain it years later.

**Omaui** The sandbar which began developing off



### Parakeet

Heard in the bush at Omaui on 12/3 and again 2/6.

### Mason Bay.

On Saturday 14 May ten Fieldclubbers set out for Mason Bay. Despite a dubious forecast everything went well. The ferry had been cancelled because of the weather a couple of days before but the sea had settled enough to give us an average crossing. We crossed from





Halfmoon Bay to Golden Bay and took the water taxi to Freshwater. Again, the sea was flatter than expected. The walk to Mason Bay took four hours including our lunch stop at Scott Burn. Despite the forecast the weather stayed clear and cool and although there had been recent flooding, the track was in good condition. DOC has been working along the boardwalk straight, removing manukas from the bank of the Scott Burn. The river is a man-made channel and as the trees topple, they direct the flow of the river against the sandy banks and cause undermining and a threat to the track. The rain began shortly after we arrived at the Duck Creek Hut so we had a dry day. In the evening it cleared after a shower and we went kiwi spotting without any success although calls were heard during the night. We had a comfortable night and set off at the gentlemanly hour of 10am on Sunday. We



filled in the time playing boggle and inventing mismatched names horrornyms. 'Spot' was not like the other zebras, 'Podge' was not like the other whippets etc. There is a list of some of these following. It was showery by this time and we guessed correctly that there would be an exceptionally high tide because of the near-full moon, strong westerly wind and low pressure. As it was, we had to dodge waves surging up the beach to the base of the sandhills. Towards the south end of the bay we found the first of 100 dead pilot whales. They had been stranded there three months before and the carcasses were very smelly and starting to break up. We were glad to reach the shelter of the Kilbride homestead verandah for lunch shortly after 1pm. A violet squall came through but it cleared in time for the plane to land and pick us up dead on time at 2pm. There were 400 dead or dying muttonbirds on the beach, five Mottled petrels and one Shy mollymawk.

**Beetle** On 2 June I found this stag beetle *Geodorcus helmsi* in the bush at Omaui. It was dead and its body filled with fungus which is emerging from the abdomen to shed its spores.

**First stoat** John Taylor, who found the dead Marsh crake mentioned in the last newsletter, has taken the initiative and set up seven traps around the Sutton Lagoon. He had his first success on 4 June with a female stoat.

**Cattle egrets** On 11 May Sandy King saw a cattle egret flying over Horseshoe Bay, Stewart Island. Gay Munro saw three at Mokotua on 29 May.

**IEC** The Invercargill Environment Centre Te Whenua Awhi has just celebrated its tenth birthday. The Fieldclub has been an associate of the IEC for that decade. If you haven't visited the Centre, you need to. It is situated in the SIT arcade between Esk and Don Streets. Lots of displays and resource material.

**Wetland birds** Sabrina Luecht has an enquiry...I am currently collating all available national data for banded rail, fernbird, marsh crake and spotless crake. The project is supervised by Colin O'Donnell and Hugh Robertson to conduct a national assessment of wetlands. I require records of these species being sighted/heard. I am utilising public sightings, journals, EBird, Bioweb etc. Records to date go back as far as ~1835. You may have received a similar request last year for bittern.



I would be grateful for any records, consisting of: species, location, coordinates, date, sex (if known), observer, source (e.g. journal, pers.comm. etc), Additional habitat information.

**Overheard conversation from a small child.** “We’ve got a Belted Dalloway, except that it hasn’t got a stripe. It’s not black either. I think it’s a Jersey but Mummy says its just a goat.”

### **Horrornyms**

Spot was not like the other zebras, Brains was not like the other guineapigs, Ginger was not like the other Dalmatians, Sooty was not like the other Polar bears, Fluffy was not like the other goldfish, Stumpy was not like the other giraffes, Buttercup was not like the other wolverines, Daisy was not like the other warthogs, Patch was not like the other blackbirds, Mittens was not like the other dolphins, Whiskers was not like the other parakeets, Emily was not like the other roosters, Carrot-top was not like the other Bald Eagles, Fritz was not like the other long-haired Persians, Methuselah was not like the other mayflies, Blossom was not like the other ferns, Flopsy Mopsy Cottontail and Peter were not like the other foxhounds, Fluffy Bum was not like the other kangaroos.

...And we have Podge the whippet, Jumbo the mouse, Velvet the porcupine, Eeyore the beaver, Rex the tadpole, Tuppence the whale, Tiddles the weasel, Blondie the Black widow, Twinkletoes the elephant, Gerald the hyaena, Hoppy the snail, Skippy the caterpillar, Mephistopheles the Angel fish, Brighteyes the hagfish, Bones the pufferfish, Zippy the sloth, Earnest the galah, Blanche the chameleon, Bandylegs the hippopotamus, Four-eyes the spider, Snuggles the vulture, Diamond Jim the woodlouse, Squeak the brontosaurus, Chalkie the Black mamba, Squidgy the sea urchin, Archimedes the Dung beetle, Trixie the koala, Big John the aphid, Schnozz the Pug and Thumper the corgi

### **Tautuku visit**

On 28 May five of us made an excursion to Tautuku. It was a fine day. We called at MacLean Falls, Lake Wilkie, Tautuku Estuary, Tautuku Nature Walk and Porpoise Bay. The photos show the boardwalk at Tautuku Estuary and a very substantial ponga *Dicksonia fibrosa* on the McLean Falls track.

