

MATUKU

WAIKATO REGION NEWSLETTER

Ornithological Society of New Zealand

September, 2010

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Programme

15 September: Monthly meeting. Craig Purvis, DOC. "Birds of Snares Island."

19 September, Picnic at the Taitua Arboretum. Meet at noon-ish out there. Phone Dai Morgan if interested (07 8482522).

20 October: Monthly meeting. Abbie Mason, University of Waikato. "Vocal communication between blue penguins – do they care if you are from Oamaru or Australia?"

21-23 October (Labour Weekend), Trip to Blue Duck Lodge. Chalet and dorm style accomodation. More information to come shortly.

17 November: Monthly meeting. Oliver Gansell, DOC. "Bird monitoring in the Coromandel."
November, Finding Caspian tern colonies in the Waikato. As part of the 2011 Caspian tern survey, we will try and locate colonies within the Waikato Region. Dates and times to come.

1 December: OSNZ Christmas do. Agenda yet to be confirmed. More information to come.

Recent bird sightings

Tui: 1 feeding on a large banksia, 7.55 am 24th June 2010, at 10 Churchill Avenue, Maeroa. “It flew up into the tree next to the banksia when it saw me and sat there warbling, so I’m sure it went back to feeding after I’d headed off to work” (Rae McCormick). At least one visiting the same group of trees in Silverdale garden throughout June. “The same neighbour watched 6 tuis chasing each other through the branches of a group of bare oak trees in the park in our street, at the beginning of June” (Bev Woolley). 9.30am, 9 September: “I have just been over to my neighbour’s, where I counted 10 tuis feeding in a large kowhai tree. One dominant bird that appeared larger than the rest, was not happy about this and spent his time chasing the others out of the tree. At one point he succeeded, and from the top of the tree gave a few bursts of song, but the others were back almost at once, and the feeding and chasing continued. There was no singing while they were all feeding. No bands could be seen on any of the birds” (Bev Woolley).

Morepork: 1 calling intermittently from trees in back yard, Silverdale, 3am to 5.30 am on 8th June (Bev Woolley).

Bellbird: 1 unbanded bird in Silverdale on 30 June. Also reported by neighbour a few doors away about two weeks previously, and again in early September (Bev Woolley). John Innes said this was the third sighting of an unbanded bellbird in the city since the bellbird release earlier.

Cattle Egrets: 7 at the end of Horahora Rd, Rangiriri on 30 August. Sighted when a harrier put them up. They then headed further away towards a mob of cattle a couple of paddocks back from the road, then disappeared as they settled. Could well have been more birds there (David Riddell & Annette Taylor).

Galahs: 6 on maize stubble by Miranda turnoff, Mangatawhiri, on 30 August (David Riddell & Annette Taylor).

NZ Dotterel: 10 pairs at Opoutere on 31 August on their territories, but no nests found, also 8 birds at Onemana, and 6 at Whiritoa on 1 September. Also 34 **Variable Oystercatchers** present on the Opoutere spit, along with a pair of **Caspian terns** and **10 Red-billed gulls** (Bev Woolley).

Kaka: heard at Opoutere calling from the pines at the back of the beach, on 31 August, 3 seen flying back towards the Youth Hostel (Bev Woolley).

Rooks: two flying high over Fairview Downs on 13 September (Neil Fitzgerald).

Grey-faced Petrel Project: 2010/11 Progress report No. 1

A brief summary of results from the period April/June 2010

1. Capture and banding at Mauao

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number of birds</u>		<u>Weight (g)</u>			
	<u>Banded</u>	<u>Recaptured</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Weighed</u>	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>Range</u>
19/04/10	6	19	25	25	538	470-625
03/05/10	5	21	26	26	535	460-660
04/05/10	5	8	13	13	525	490-580
05/05/10	0	1	1	1	590	590-590
07/05/10	1	21	22	22	522	460-610
08/05/10	4	0	4	4	510	500-530
10/05/10	9	24	33	33	532	480-640
14/05/10	5	11	16	16	506	450-560
17/05/10	19	25	44	44	505	450-570
22/05/10	5	16	21	18	518	440-560
26/05/10	2	10	12	12	521	470-590
30/05/10	12	15	27	27	516	470-560
06/06/10	4	1	5	5	502	460-570
09/06/10	0	3	3	3	513	490-540
12/06/10	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>505</u>	<u>500-510</u>
Total	78	176	254	251	521	440-660

Recaptures were 69% of all captures.

2. Birds which had been banded as chicks at Mauao, and were recaptured in this period for the first time as adults at Mauao

<u>Year banded</u>	<u>No. recaptured in this banding period</u>	<u>Age at first adult recapture</u>
1999/00	1	10

The capture of just one bird in this category is in marked contrast to the same period last year, when 12 such birds were caught.

3. Recaptures at Mauao of birds which had been banded at Motuotau Island

Five birds which had been banded as chicks at Motuotau Island were recaptured as adults at Mauao during this period:

Three of these were recaptured as adults, for the third or subsequent time, at Mauao.

The other two were birds which were banded as chicks at Motuotau in 1999, and translocated to Mauao for the artificial rearing trial. One of these has been caught as an adult at Mauao three times previously. For the other bird it was its first adult recapture at Mauao, at the age of nearly 11 years. This brings to 4, the number of birds from the translocation and artificial rearing trial which have been caught as adults at Mauao.

4. Birds banded as chicks at Mauao, subsequently recaptured as adults (all years)

<u>Year banded</u>	<u>No. banded</u>	<u>Died before fledging</u>	<u>Recaptured as adults during the duration of the project to date</u>	
			<u>No.</u>	<u>% of total banded</u>
1991/92	10	1	3	30
1992/93	3	1	1	33
1993/94	3	1	1	33
1994/95	3	-	2	67
1995/96	21	-	9	43
1996/97	30	-	13	43
1997/98	33	-	14	42
1998/99	36	-	11	31
1999/00	27	-	10	37
2000/01	34	-	10	29
2001/02	36	-	14	39
2002/03	23	-	7	30
2003/04	1	-	-	-
2004/05	8	-	3	37
2005/06	2	1	-	-
2006/07	30	1	-	-
2007/08	20	-	-	-
<u>2008/09</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	369	5	98	

5. Recaptures at Mauao of birds which had been banded at locations other than Mauao or Motuotau Island

One bird which had been banded as a chick at Moutohora (Whale Island) was recaptured at Mauao for the third time as an adult.

A bird which had been banded as an adult at Mauao, was recaptured for the third time at Mauao, but this bird's history shows it has also been captured at sea of Wollongong, NSW on 17/12/05, and banded with an Australian band.

Band	Date banded	Location	Age at banding	Date this recapture	Age at this recapture	No. previous recaptures at Mauao
190769	26/12/94	Whale Is.	Chick	30/05/10	14	2
209649	11/04/03	Mauao	Adult	26/05/10	?	2

6. Dead birds

a) Grey-faced Petrel

A banded bird (E 188248) was found in Tauranga city by a member of the public, the bird suffering from an injured wing and eye, on 27 April. The bird was delivered to Holistic Veterinary Services where staff found it not suitable for treatment, and euthanased it on 28 April. The bird had been banded as an adult on Motuotau Island on 14/8/1995 and it had been recaptured there on 10/5/2000.

b) Northern Diving Petrel

A freshly-dead banded bird (D 165627) was found beach-cast on Waihi Beach by a member of the public, on 06/06/2010. This bird was banded as an adult on Motuotau Island 14 years previously during this project, on 09/05/1996. The finder stated that "Another bird of what looked like the same species was found less than 100m away along the beach. Stormy conditions."

Hugh Clifford and Paul Cuming

A Wild Goose Chase

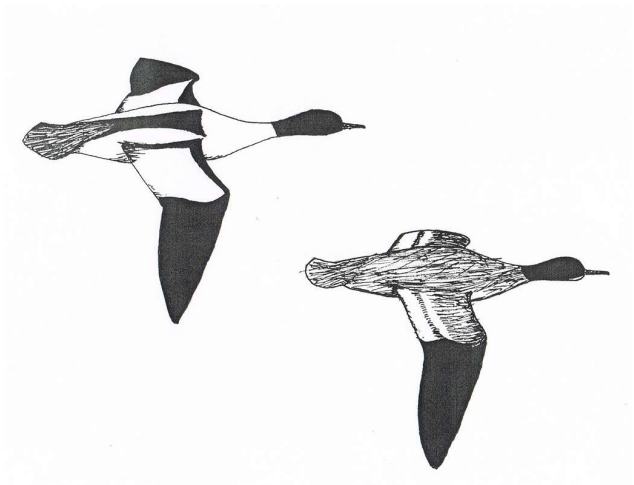
*Local member **Graham Saunders** shares a birding experience in Britain.*

Work had taken me to Scotland and the journey had allowed for a day and half's birdwatching – a rare treat for me. With plummeting temperatures, and December gales and rain it seemed sensible to focus on the geese that flood into south-west Scotland for the winter.

What better place to start than Dumfries. An early morning: 8.45am. I have little respect for those who perpetuate the myth that one needs to get up supremely early to see birds. And anyway it's still pitch black there at 8am around the winter solstice. I took a brief stop in the town centre to view over the angry Nith. Swollen with relentless precipitation it had even overflowed a few days previously. Not goose, but Goosander; this is a favourite wintering haunt, but just one drake and one duck were braving the torrents.

From there to Caerlaverock following the ever-widening Nith down to the coast. It is Barnacle Geese that bring fame to this area. And it wasn't far out of Dumfries that the fields were packed with these

black-and-white fowl. I arrived at the WWT reserve to the cacophony of over-flying geese. Individually they sound like a freshly-whelped lap dog, in chorus the chugging of a hefty train.



♂ and ♀ Goosander



Barnacle Goose

With birds flocking in to the 'Whooper Pond' it was evident that feeding was nearing; I made my way there too. There was an order to the feasting: dominant were Mute Swans, followed by Whooper Swans, then Canada Geese, then Greylags, next Mallards, then Lesser Scaup, then Tufted Ducks and Wigeon, and finally Coots and Pigeons. Also noteworthy at the pond was a leucistic Oystercatcher standing out in a crowd of its pied relatives. As well as the wildfowl there was a chance to have a good look at some common passerines; winter thrushes filled the trees along the tracks. Meanwhile bold Roe Deer ventured on to the marshy fields.



Greylag Geese



♂ Wigeon

Then on to the R.S.P.B. reserve at Mersehead for more geese, including, I'd hoped, Pink-footed, and a spot of lunch. More wildfowl: Pintail, Wigeon, Teal, but only Barnacle, Canada and Greylag Geese. A leucistic Barnacle Goose could have deceived the unwary into thinking it was Snow Goose; so it was fortunate that the volunteer warden had informed me about it beforehand. A few Pink-footed Geese and a Richardson's Canada Goose were in the area, but not on the reserve that

particular afternoon. Towards sunset (4.00 pm), as the clamorous starlings whirled in to roost in the reeds, I made myself cosy looking over a hedge near the farm buildings. As the darkness became too strong to see I started to head off to the car park disappointed. But on my way the warden directed me to look out across the field: an almost imperceptible, shapeless pale ghost standing atop a fence post. And in a few moments it was a fleeting pale patch passing over the grass to out of view. Barn Owls breed on the reserve, but this was the first time in many visits that I'd managed to see one there.

Then to Dalbeattie for a chicken supper, and up to the 'Cross Keys Hotel' in New Galloway to spend the evening by the roaring fire in the bar, doing some work assisted by good whisky.

There was a hearty breakfast before braving the bright and frosty morning and charging off to the nearby Ken Dee Marshes, famed for its wintering Greenland White-fronted Geese. There's only one way to travel along those slippery, icy, single-track roads to the 'Mains of Duchrae Farm': Sideways. It certainly gets the blood pumping, but there was no need to worry, those stone walls would stop anyone going too far off the road. Arriving early (9am) I made my way along the track accompanied by the call of a buzzard. For me this sound evokes sunny days in deciduous wooded valleys in the south-west of England; family holidays back in the days when Buzzards were rare east of Bristol. But this was a far cry from those days' landscape and conditions. I made my way to the goose viewing point and set up the 'scope. Just Icelandic Greylags and Canadas with, a solitary Pink-foot. For thirty minutes I waited with the cold nibbling on my fingers but no White-fronts (9 a.m. was too early!).



Pink footed Goose



Buzzard

The farmer, who had been feeding the cattle, came up for a chat, and explained that they were probably on the other side of the hill. But I got the impression that he was much prouder of his Red Kites. At last: a raucous commotion, a growing sound – a blubbing teenager. And up Loch Ken flew an unruly skein of White-fronts to join the Greylags on *this* side of the hill ... then another. For an essentially drab grey-brown bird they looked unexpectedly colourful in the bright morning light. But wishing to see Willow Tit and not wishing to miss the ferry to Belfast, I decided to leave the geese and head further along the track. I progressed slowly as I checked the flocks of small birds that

seemed to be everywhere, titmice of all shapes and sizes, but not the desired one, dangled above my head, while a multitude of chaffinches darted from perch to ground and back. And on the stone wall a squirrel bounded along ... I've been so conditioned to expect only that obnoxious alien Grey, but I'm glad I checked this one; it wasn't, it was the native, and much rarer, Red. The number of birds seemed to increase with every step. Eventually the reason became apparent ... feeders hanging from a hide that overlooks Loch Ken. And from the hide, just a few feet away, an elusive Willow Tit was busily pecking at nuts. A few moments to take in the bird before heading back to the car park. To crown the trip back at the farm, the most majestic of all birds put in an appearance. Red Kites may be scavengers, but nothing comes close to them. The way that tail twists, the way those wings hang; such grace. That they were introduced recently to Dumfries & Galloway could not detract from the bird or the moment. Obliging it landed on a fence post to feed on some offal... but, alas, there were only a few minutes to take in its majesty before it was time to head off for the ferry.



White-fronted Goose



Red Kite



Red Squirrel



Willow Tit

Caerlaverock W.W.T. is situated on the Solway Firth south east of Dumfries on the B725.

Mersehead R.S.P.B. reserve is also situated on the Solway Firth, but south west of Dumfries; off the A710 between Kirkbean and Sandyhills.

Ken Dee Marshes R.S.P.B. reserve is about 16 km northwest of Castle Douglas on the west side of Loch Ken. Mains of Duchrae Farm is on a small road that follows the River Dee and Loch Ken north from the B795 between Laurieston and Townhead of Greenlaw, that eventually leads on to the A762. The Red Kite feeding station is also just off the B795 between Laurieston and Townhead of Greenlaw.

The photographs of Greylag, Pink-footed and White-fronted Geese and Red Kite are from Wikipedia and free of copyright. The other photographs were taken on other occasions.

Hamilton Lake Census, 12 September 2010

Present: Barry Friend and Stella Rowe, 10am-12pm.

SPECIES OF BIRD	ADULTS	JUVENILES	TOTAL
COOT	187		187
MALLARD DUCKS	92		92
DOMESTIC DUCKS (white Aylesbury)	1		1
CANADA GEESE	2		2
DOMESTIC WHITE GEESE	9		9
KINGFISHERS	4		4
PUKEKOS	87	3	90
(LARGE) BLACK SHAG (CARBOS)	3		3
LITTLE BLACK SHAGS	14		14
LITTLE SHAGS	8		8
PIED SHAGS	3		3
WELCOME SWALLOWS	13		13
GREY TEAL	1		1
FERAL ROCK PIGEONS	253		253
WHITE DOVES	1		1
New Zealand Dabchicks	2		2
DEAD. None.			

Previous weather: Mainly wet with some heavy downpours. Everywhere is very damp. A few days with sunny spells. Temperatures in the teens mostly.

Today's weather: After a night of rain it was mostly fine for our census with just light rain in the breeze. At 11.30AM the clouds doubled and there was a heavy downpour.

Not such a Spring-like day for our first census of the season. It was however, an outstanding census for birds not seen very often on the lake. When I arrived Stella had already seen two Kingfishers and then a third one arrived and later a fourth. Stella had also already seen one of our rarities of the day: a Grey Teal. It was not too far from the edge of the lake.

Our next unusual sighting was just a short walk away – not that I recognised them at first, unlike Stella knowing straight away that they were a pair of Dabchicks. These are quite rare for our lake! Small with thin necks and yellow eyes, the light was not good today being so cloudy but we could see some of the markings. They were diving and resurfacing.

It was also a good day for the Shags – all four species were present, a total of 28 with the most being 14 Little Blacks. The Mallards are all off reading Mills & Boons, only 92 left to look after the muddy shores. The pigeons were definitely frisky and the Pukekos and Coot were in territorial mode. One Pukeko was so annoyed by our presence that it leapt up and attacked Stella by placing its feet on her arm. There were at least three Pukeko nests. We watched a changeover, one on, one off near the large gum trees.

Conditions: As expected the visible water level looked high and the edges of the lake were sodden and muddy. Large puddles of water were in various places around the lake and at the edge of the

concrete walking track. Innes Common had large pools of water. There were two canoes on the water and there were three or more people line fishing from the shore. Some very milky coloured water along the North Eastern sides. Three new willow trees have been planted.

Next census is on Sunday 10th October – hope to see you there.

Barry.

OSNZ Waikato Kawhia Harbour Surveys

28/06/20-10 tide: 4m Time 1150

Personnel H.Clifford S.Rowe Z.Clifford ground per J.Rowe

Weather light wind overcast B.Postill DOC J.Hickman

	Oparau River & Ellis Pt	Opeope Rocks & Shoreline	Mid Harbour	Lagoon	Harbour Mouth	Nth Harbour	TeMotu Island	TeMotu Sandbank	Total
Gannet	2	1							3
Black Shag	1	1							2
Pied Shag	18	25	2	5	8	2			60
L B Shag									
Little Shag			1						1
WF Heron	12	2							14
Reef Heron									
Spoonbill	73					16			89
Black Swan	6		6				8		20
P. Shelduck	7					1			8
Mallard						5			5
CanadaG.	141	134							275
SI PO	281					1002	150	3800	5233
V.OC							5	7	12
Pied Stilt	125	170				60		2	357
Black/hybrid									
Red Knot									
B. Dotterel		3					650		653
NZ Dotterel							6		6
SW Plover		4							4
Godwit		6						800	806
Bkb Gull	11	9		3	3	2	7	2	37
RB Gull	24				4			32	60
Caspian	4	1						16	21
WF Tern	1	2							3
Kingfisher							1		1
East.Curlew									
Whimbrel									
Grey teal						2			2

OSNZ Waikato Aotea Harbour Surveys

date 28/06/2010 **Height** 4m Time
Personnel; L. Hoverd J. Hoverd C. Annandale

1128

Weather: overcast light wind

	Aotea Lagoon	Upper Harbour	Morrison's Roost	Harbour Entrance	TOTAL
Gannet				2	2
Black Shag					
Pied Shag			1	17	18
L. Black Shag					
Little Shag			3	1	4
WF Heron					
Reef Heron	1			1	2
Spoonbill			17		17
Black Swan	1				1
P. Shelduck	2				2
Mallard					
Canada Goose					
Harrier					
SIPO	225	506	342	15	1087
VOC	2			4	6
Pied Stilt		72	17		89
Black/hybrid					
Red Knot					
Banded Dotterel				28	28
New Zealand Dotterel				5	5
SW Plover	2	2			4
Godwit	21	139	24		184
Blackb Gull	2		3	4	9
RB Gull	2	4			6
Caspian Tern	3	8	8		19