

JUNE 2010



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS

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Newsletter of Nelson Region

www.osnz.org.nz

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There was no regular meeting for the Month of June due to the AGM being held over that period.

Programme for JULY to SEPTEMBER 2010

The following is the schedule for our usual monthly meetings at the Solander Fisheries.

5th July:

We will have Josh Kemp who will speak on factors affecting the breeding and survival of kea.

2nd August:

A discussion on how to encourage expansion in the membership and provide interesting, productive workshops and field days for both members and potential Members.

6th September:

Ron Moorhouse will speak at the September meeting on "Recent advances in the conservation of kakapo"

Monthly Meetings : Venue

We meet usually on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7.15 pm in the "Solander Building", Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). Anyone interested is welcome! Contact Stuart Wood 03-544 3932 or Don Cooper 02-544 8109.

Recent meetings, talks, events

Over the Queens Birthday weekend the AGM of the OSNZ was held at the Annual Conference.

The Conference was a great success with over 130 delegates attending. Some notes and contributions are included below.

CONFERENCE/AGM 2010 NELSON OSNZ Conference 5 / 6 June 2010, Nelson New Zealand

Friday afternoon and I am on my way to my FIRST OSNZ conference. I am excited but also a wee bit apprehensive. Arriving at 2 pm at the Tahuna Conference Centre I step into a nest of activity. The 140 registration tags of the 15 districts are arranged neatly on the table, the raffle books for the 4 books given to us by Craig Potton Publishing and the binoculars from Photo and Video International are all ready to go, display boards are being hung on the walls and Stuart Wood is going through the last bit of organisation with John, the Conference Centre Manager. It did not take long and the first people are arriving to register. Soon the place is buzzing.



Saturday morning up early, camera in tow to be back for the early registrations. All goes smoothly and at 9 o'clock Stuart welcomes everybody and opens officially the OSNZ conference. He then has the honour to present Charles Hufflet with a great photo of a Southern Royal Albatros taken by Steve Wood. The photo was in appreciation of the use of the Solander boardroom for our monthly meetings.

Today is the Scientific Day and it is great to see so many young people presenting their scientific papers. The day itself is full of great listening and learning. The morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are a real treat with people able to intermingle and exchange many thoughts and ideas. The scientific papers finish at 5 o'clock and while most of us are tasting the wines provided by Pied Stilt Vineyard of Motueka, others are getting the book launch on the way.

The formal launch of the "Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand, 4th Edition" is done by Neil Clifton, the Nelson/Marlborough Conservator (Department of Conservation) with a well received speech. The Checklist Committee, convened by Dr Brian Gill, have produced a robust credible checklist that the Society has jointly published with Te Papa Press.



Following the book launch, David Lawrie, the President of the OSNZ presents Brian with the "Robert Falla Memorial Award", and each of the Checklist Committee members is given a "Meritorious Service Award". This award is also presented to Kathleen Harrison (a Canterbury member) in appreciation for her services to the Society.

Diner is excellent and the chatting superb. The start of the AGM is pretty late and when the subs demands a democratic debate I sneak out to have an early(!) night.

We all pray for a Great Nelson Sunny Sunday, but we are leaving in the pouring rain for our preferred destination: Abel Tasman, Nelson Lakes or Renwick to see the NZ Falcon. Regardless of the weather everyone has a great day and looking forward to the Conference Diner.



The tables are looking great with their blue sashes and their flower arrangements.

The dinner is certainly special tonight. Our entrees: Platters of mussels, prawns and chicken kebabs coming to the tables, a buffet of Roast Beef, Ham and Seafood Mornay and after that at the tables again Pavalova, Banoffee Pie and Cream Cheese. Delicious!

The evening is coming to an end and Stuart thanks everyone for attending and presents Pauline and Gillian with some flowers and a plant for all the hard work they have done in helping Stuart and the committee to organise such a great conference. He then introduces the guest speaker Mike Standish-White who entertains us with his story of 50(?) years ago of his trip to the island Juanda Nova Reunion, a French Island of the coast of Mozambique.

David Lawrie thanks Nelson for organising such a great conference and my apprehension has finally disappeared. We will sleep well tonight.

Til Melis

SCIENTIFIC DAY

“Saturday was devoted to short presentations on ornithological work around the country. We enjoyed a wide range of subjects which included the translocation of rifleman, how falcons reduce bird damage in vineyards, recent taxonomic changes as published in the new Checklist, how fishers are reducing the accidental bycatch of seabirds and whether white-winged black terns have bred in NZ. The session was chaired by Ron Moorhouse who managed to keep the sessions running on time despite an audience that was often more engrossed in a lengthy natter over a cuppa during the breaks. A full list of abstracts can be emailed on request.”

Peter Gaze

FIELD TRIPS

Falcons : Marlborough Vineyards

“The field trip to Marlborough was focused on seeing falcon in the vineyards although the first hour or two was spent in heavy rain, trying to see out the foggy windows of an old rental van. At Renwick we were greeted by Colin Wynn who manages the project and Phil Bradfield who is the biodiversity ranger for DOC in South Marlborough. As the rain persisted we sat in a warm dry room chatting about how the project works and its success in establishing falcon in the vineyards. We also discussed the continued problems with persecution of falcon as well as the benefits of talking with groups in the community about the project and falcon conservation. All the while Colin had a captive bird (Napoleon) on his fist – a bird which was blind in one eye but had been raised to adulthood and now contributed as a breeding bird and one to help get the message across.

The rain eased to allow a trip into the vineyards where we found one of the birds. Colin was providing a little supplementary food for this bird to help prevent its dispersal and we were treated to it taking a thrown morsel just a metre above our heads. Definitely a highlight. The rest of the afternoon was spent trying to spot the black kite or even some interesting waterfowl.”

Peter Gaze



Abel Tasman Boat Trip

“With the weather forecast saying pouring rain and north-easterly winds, we all boarded the buses wondering what we were doing here. But every so often the rain would ease and there was hope in the air that maybe it wouldn’t be too bad. As we boarded Wilson’s Vista cruise ship and left Kaiteriteri, I heard comments such as, “This must be a lovely place when the sun is shining, “and, “It’s a shame we can’t go out on top, but it’s nice and warm down here.” Then as we drifted in for a closer view of Split Apple Rock, “Pity the windows are so fogged up, I think there are some shags out there, I wonder what they are?” Those standing at the stern could see there were pied and spotted shags all along the coast.

The plan was to go to Totaranui, get off for lunch, then a walk and a talk from Mike Ogle, (Golden Bay Doc office) on the translocation of ~~leak~~ ~~leak~~ into the area. But after slowing to see the seals at Tonga Island, Shay, the skipper says the sea will be even rougher around the corner, so a decision was made to return to the shelter of The Anchorage and get off there for lunch. Most of us were very relieved to hear we would be on solid ground. A quick trip back to Anchorage, then those who wanted to, could stay on the boat and continue the rolling journey on to Totaranui. (They told me later it wasn’t so bad!!)

The decision to stop at Anchorage turned out to be good, as the weather cleared and most people went for a walk around Pitt Head. Birds seen included a hedge sparrow (dunnock) a black fantail, silver eyes, bell birds, tui and sparrows. But by far the highlight of the trip was stopping at Adele Island on the way back. Shay turned off the motors, the rain stopped and we went up on the top deck to be greeted by the amazing bird sounds only heard from pest-free places. They drown out the other birds. It was a perfect example of how trapping by members of the BirdSong Trust had made such a difference to the survival of the native birds in the Abel Tasman National Park. Rudy Tetteroo from Doc talked about the formation of the trust and how the businesses who operate in the AT Park all contribute towards it. Robins have been re-introduced to the island and are now breeding there, and it is used as a crèche for kiwi. A great example of community, Doc and business working together.

A short ride back to Kaiteriteri, and we were back home earlier than planned with time to get ready for the dinner that night. Not the best day for a boat trip, but not a complete disaster with most accepting there’s nothing we can do about the weather and using the time to chat about both birding and non-birding issues.”

Pauline Samways

Nelson Lakes

“Heavy rain and loud cloud persisted from Tahuna and through to Golden Downs Forest. Not the best start for the day, however on the summit of Kerr's Hill clearing skies over Mt Robert signalled better weather ahead.

Alighting from the bus at Kerr Bay a few people caught sight of a Falcon before it disappeared behind the tree canopy. John Henderson DOC a ranger based at Lake Rotoiti met us at this point. At the start of the Bellbird Track he gave an outline of the various programmes both past and current that have been implemented to assist the recovery certain bird species in the park. The track is very aptly named as the Bellbird's song almost drowned out John's voice at times! Possums, Rodents, Mustelids, and Wasps have all had peak populations taking their toll on all bird life. Kaka were one of the first to be in serious decline, honeydew was under attack from wasps, plus the mammalian predators taking the eggs and young from the nests proved to be the last 'straw'. Poison bait stations for wasps made a significant reduction with this pest. A massive trapping programme by both the department staff and a volunteer group 'Friends of Lake Rotoiti' has created a Mainland Island in which the re-introduction of Great Spotted Kiwi (Roa) has been successful with chicks now adding to the population.

The party of 14 split into a number of groups each taking tracks to suit personal abilities. The forest canopy showed scars from heavy snow damage and wind topple, but the well graded tracks were easy under foot. The ubiquitous Bellbird tended to dominate the scene but the polystyrene and bottle technique produced some startling results with Tui joining the chorus along with Silvereye's Grey Warbler, Fantail, and Tomtit's all present at once. It was good to find one Robin on the St. Arnauad track which in real Robin style shared its company with us allowing for some photographs and observations on the flashing of a white frontal spot in the centre of the forehead just above the bill.

Throughout the walks the rain held off and the day got brighter. The group re-assembled at the visitor centre with a comprehensive display of the parks features it aided many with questions arising from observations made on the walks. Before leaving the visitor centre a suggestion for a 'cuppa' was raised, the bus driver approved to a slight route deviation to take us to the Top House Hotel. What followed was perhaps the highlight of the day for many, this historic Cobb cottage had been recently restored and the blazing log fire was welcome on a mid-winter day. It was a very happy group having hot drinks, and scones with lashings of cream and jam all seated at a large table built with the cottage in 1887 which had never left the room. The manager kindly gave us a potted history of the place including the account of a mass murder which occurred in 1894 on the property. Needless to say there is also a ghost associated with the cottage. As we left the cloud had lifted completely from Mt. Robert making a very pleasant end to the day."

PS: It was still pouring down on the return to the Centre at Tahuna.

Don Cooper

Brook Sanctuary

"Twenty attendees enjoyed a break in the weather to visit the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary in sunshine on Monday. They heard from the Chair, David Butler of the progress being made to create a pest-free fenced wildlife sanctuary behind Nelson and the final fund-raising effort. A walk on a new track under development passed through broadleaved forest with fuchsias to Nelson's first water supply weir, a lively waterfall after all the rain"

David Butler.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NELSON/GOLDEN BAY NEWS LETTER

This newsletter can only be continued on a regular basis if members contribute articles that are of interest. **Please** do contribute and make the Newsletter a regular and interesting contribution to the region

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