



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER JULY/AUGUST 2010

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SHOW AND TELL

True to community cinema tradition, after a shaky start, the advertised full length feature on 7 March, fizzled out half way through due to technical difficulties. There was no hissing or booing from the polite gathered audience and it did give them a chance to show their own photos and videos and to share bird talk.

Rob Schuckard will take centre stage at the next meeting on April 4. He has sent through the following notes for his presentation.

Marine Survey of Golden and Tasman Bay

Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay appealed a decision of Marlborough District Council to provide a permit to Australian Worldwide Exploration, to drill for oil in the Tasman Bay. Through mediation between FNHTB and AWE, funding was provided to establish a protocol for future likewise applications. This protocol has been presented to three Top of South Councils at 20th September 2010. This protocol will be integrated in any future work of AWE in NZ and is up to the discretion of councils to be implemented.

Our main concern was however the total lack of information to establish the environmental threshold for the application as required under RMA. The applicant has agreed to fund a baseline study of the biodiversity of the outer Tasman Bay if FNHTB were not pursuing their appeal. NIWA was granted the contract for this study. Members of OSNZ participated in the fieldwork and played a crucial role in the success of this study. This study has a three different components.

1. Undertake 3 systematic aerial surveys over Tasman and Golden bay to identify the location of baitfish shoals and associated feeding seabirds and marine mammals during peaks in summer breeding.

2. Using stable isotopes, establish food-chain linkages between baitfish from the outer Tasman Bay and seabird chick feathers from local seabird breeding colonies around Tasman/Golden Bays. Species selected were Spotted Shag, Little Penguin and Australasian Gannet.
3. Seabird and marine mammal surveys across Tasman Bay and Golden Bay to complement the aerial surveys.

King Shag Study in Marlborough Sounds

Friends of Nelson Haven were also involved as a party to the courts for a mussel farm application in the Forsyth Bay area. Impact of marine farm on King Shag habitat near Duffers Reef was one of the Friends main concerns. Following mediation a sum of money for external advice became available to assess all aspects of King Shag ecology.

Friends approached members of OSNZ (David Melville and myself) to manage this project. We have been able to present a contract to Dr. Mennobart van Eerden from the Netherlands. He has been studying cormorants as a main part of his professional career. He is the chair of IUCN-Wetlands International Cormorant Research Group. The Species Survival Commission (SSC) is the largest of IUCN's six volunteer commissions. SSC members provide technical and scientific advice to governments, international conventions, and conservation organizations throughout the world. SSC also provides the best available information critical to the development of tools for species conservation such as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. King Shag is regarded as vulnerable in this listing.

The IUCN Species Programme implements global species conservation initiatives with and in support of SSC. This Species Programme's support role includes coordinating the Red List, conducting communications work, and facilitating inputs to conventions. In this document, guidance is provided to IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups on when and how to prepare and promote a Species Conservation Strategy (SCSs). This guidance includes advice on how to conduct a thorough Status Review; how to develop, through broad consultation with stakeholders, a Vision and Goals for the conservation of a species or species group; how to set Objectives to help achieve the Vision and Goals; and how to address those Objectives through geographically and thematically specific Actions.

Mennobart is developing a species conservation strategy (SCS) for New Zealand King Shag according the protocol provided by SSC:

- Literature review of King Shag biology
- Preparation of Conservation Management Plan
- Identification of research required and prioritisation of activities

Last part of the project may well advice some future telemetry studies to establish the species feeding areas. Whether they do use the environment in a randomized or non random way are matters of great importance for the

conservation of the species. While Mennobart was in the country, we tried a few methods of catching the birds to gain experience of potential future proposals. Also we like to extract a few very small blood samples. These blood samples will be analysed by Martyn Kennedy from the University of Otago. Martyn is working on the taxonomic relationships between Leucocarbo Shags. He has already for some time asked for these samples. The last missing species within New Zealand is King Shag.

BIRDS SCENE

Willie has seen a **NZ dotterel** on the Bell's Island shell banks earlier this month, a grand sighting close to the city. Also from the Waimea Estuary, Willie reports the **banded rail** survey gave an encouraging indication of increased numbers compared to six years ago. More on that soon. Not so welcome perhaps is the increasing number of **black swan** on the Haven. Peter Field counted over 200 recently. **Shining cuckoos** are quietly feasting in suburban gardens before departing for a winter elsewhere. Sunday the 27th I watched one in Motueka cleaning up caterpillars on native plants.

Maybe not the most becoming of portrait photography but wow, look at those legs, and that's what banding and flagging is all about – numbers and letters. Pauline sent this in from the Motueka Sandspit. A great way to recover banding info.



OVER THE HILL

At Wairau Lagoon on 6 March, Mike Bell, David Bell and Julia Melville caught and registered 24 **black-fronted terns** with metal band on the left leg and white engraved alfa/num band on the right. This bunch was also sprayed with picric acid down their breast. This year's juveniles are likewise banded but without the punk culture yellow dye of their parents. Keep a look out for wintering black-fronted terns in coastal areas, estuaries and near the BoulderBank.

PARISH NOTICES

Every so often a field trip is organised at short notice. For those of you receiving tactile versions of the newsletter but would like to be notified of these trips, please let me know and I'll add you to a phone list. Gail 5450456.

Next month's newsletter will have Robin and Sandy Toy's report on the Cobb Valley kiwi survey.

THE ROVING BIRDWATCHER

Lucky for some

It was with a bit of luck that Father's watering can was empty when the waxeye fledgling was scooting around the garden and fell in. Father noticed an adult bird fluttering around the rim and presumed it was after spiders then later heard bumping noises from inside the can, had a look and found baby bird. Lifted it out and two very agitated adults appeared on the scene. The fledgling fluttered into some garden undergrowth accompanied by its parents and we hope all lived happily ever after.

Last December a thrush chose to build her nest with an open aspect just a metre out from my kitchen window in a low unidentified shrub. I was worried about the noise and activity Christmas Day would generate but it was a windy night that posed a problem. The morning after I looked up from the sink to see the female thrush dithering about over the nest and not settling down, so went outside to get a closer look and found a branch from the lemonwood above had fallen right across the nest and she couldn't get in. I removed the offending piece of wood, the thrush came back to her three eggs and consequently reared one fledgling. One egg disappeared, and I removed another with a dead chick inside, a week after the first nestling had hatched.

On a visit to my sister's property in Katikati she proudly showed me kingfisher nesting holes in clay banks down by the stream, and we marvelled at kingfisher colours shining in the sun when birds rested on an aerial above the veg garden, but later while inside, we heard a terrible clump on the ranch door sliders. She grabbed a teatowel, I grabbed the cat. She took the teatowel outside, I locked the cat up inside. On the verandah we were greeted to two kingfishers lying prone on the decking. On our approach one bird staggered to its feet and flew off to rest nearby and we covered the other with the towel and took it inside to a small dark box and left it in the wash-house. Several hours later we were able to release it, with no apparent harm. Not so lucky was the Californian quail several years earlier that kamikazed into the ranch door sliders at Gillie's Teapot Valley farm. Not wanting to waste an opportunity, she plucked the bird and roasted the morsel for an afternoon snack. GDQ

PROGRAMME 2011

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 03-544 8109.

Monday 4 April

Indoor meeting
Rob Schuckard
Marine Survey, and
King Shag Study

Monday 2 May

Indoor meeting
Sandy Toy
'Tale of Two Kiwis'

Monday 6 June

No local meeting

Queen's Birthday Wknd
June 4, 5, 6,

OSNZ AGM
and Conference
Wellington

Thanks to all who contributed.

Contributions for the April newsletter: please email or phone me by 16 April. Gail 03 5450456 stagefrightmusic@paradise.net.nz