



## NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER

October/November 2015

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### MYSTERY PHOTO



Photo Richard Wells Nov 2015.

What tree is this? Or better still, who made the holes?

### Evening Meetings

Members have been informed and entertained with talks and photos of birds, some local and some from far away, Don Hadden rather confused me with photos of different silvereyes from around the Pacific after a great show of Norfolk Island shots.

Brad Myer from Kaitiaka O Ngahere Ltd gave a great account of his work on South Georgia, amongst the asbestos riddled remains of whaling stations, sea mammals and unwanted plant pest species. Since the reindeer and rats have been removed the indigenous Sth Georgia pipit seems to be making a comeback. Tourists visit the island to pay homage to Ernest Shackleton whose grave is there. Thank you Brad, Don and members who share their photos.

## **BIRDING, OUT AND ABOUT.**

**When** arriving at the Beach Cafe for a coffee at Tahunanui, a few weeks ago, I suggested to Mr TQ that the first to see a falcon gets an icecream. Soon after, yours truly saw said bird plummet into the scrub, fly out empty handed and fly low and casually past the cafe windows. It was a sure bet. I've spotted falcon in the area before. There's plenty of passerines, and cooing meatier prey over Nature Land. I got my icecream. But then:

### **Look Before You Eat**

We had just started packing up a pleasant picnic at Eastbourne, discussing the eastern rosellas we'd just seen, when a broad spectrum shag splatter copped all four of us including two rugs and picnic baskets. I looked around, sure enough there were the tell tale nature detective signs – guano covered tree branches and foliage, black and white little shag heads, one or two grey heads and bulky nests among the coastal trees. We were between them and the sea. We went and had icecreams elsewhere.

**And**, when a ferry trip is imminent don't forget to sling your binoculars round your neck before you leave the house!! They're not much good left on the kitchen table. As it happened the trip was a bit rough and we were all ushered inside.

### **Popular birds**

The **bar-tailed godwit** made it to the top of the list this year in Forest and Bird's popularity stakes. They've been back in the country a month or so now, but on Sunday 15 November overlooking the Motueka Estuary a well attended public 'Welcome the Godwits' event was enjoyed. OSNZ lined up a few telescopes for young and old alike to marvel at the telescopic view over the incoming tide at groups of waders sitting on the sandspit. Thanks go to the Friends of Motueka Estuary, Doc and the folk manning the stalls.

A few years ago the **falcon** won the bird of the year. Don't forget to enter your sightings on-line at E-bird and the NZ falcon survey. Go to *Birds NZ homepage* to read the latest falcon survey newsletter. Richard W reports from Tadmor a prowling falcon carried off one of a pair of nesting tui near his place and Don H saw a keruru being taken in Teal Valley.

If visiting Wellington avoid walking around Te Ahumairangi Hill in Thorndon where a pair of falcon have been busy with domestic matters and dive bombing human intruders through their patch. But make a visit around Wilton and Wilton's bush for plentiful tui, kaka through the neighbourhood and morepork at night. Also watch for released kakariki in the bush.

### **Woodn't it be lovely - part 2**

Good news, The **Australian Wood duck aka maned goose** has been accepted by OSNZ's Rare Bird Appraisal Committee as a new breeding bird in NZ. Willie and others have been keeping an eye on these handsome water fowl in the Tasman area and confirmed a pair with four ducklings mid October, unfortunately diminishing over a week or so with no ducklings seen at the end. Seeing only four in the brood, the odds weren't great for the wood ducks.

## Wood Ducks, Tasman area



Photo Willie Cook Oct 2015

All ducklings run the gauntlet of eels, pukekos, harriers, maybe falcon and black backed gulls. Grace Sutherland sent in her observation from Wakapuaka ,early Oct: 'On Tuesday morning at the ponds we watched black-backed gulls circling around and swooping at ducklings. A successful swoop and the sight of duckling legs dangling from a gull's bill not pretty. The gull settled on a muddy bank to devour its catch.'

### **From our Golden Bay correspondents:**

Ken George organised a very successful Golden Bay Big Day birding on Labour weekend 24 Sat. More on this next newsletter. Earlier, on 23 September ' there were 5 **cattle egret** in a tight little group, standing in with the cows in a dairy paddock to the right of the main road just before the Takaka River bridge going north. I see them regularly here in the Bay at this time of the year, but not as many as 5 in one group before.'

Chris Petyt: Rototai 31 Oct, with A & M Milne, 'Any nests probably flooded lately. 55 Caspians but only 2 sitting. Only a fraction of sand-bank remains after storms some months ago. 55 RBG at nesting site; on flats nearby flock of 38 Black-bills and 10 RBG. 12 Spoonbill on sand-bank. 1 Banded Dott seen so hopefully another on a nest.'

And from Rosemary J, mid Nov, 'I saw a **whimbrel** on Pohara Beach yesterday. We were sitting on the dune having coffee and it might have been under the ramp nearby, and walked for a short distance in front of us and took off. I've never seen one on the beach before.' Willie C spotted a **curlew** at Totara Ave several weeks before that and Chris comments, he's seen both species on Farewell Spit but not elsewhere in the Bay.

### **Members Home and Around**

**Cirl buntings:** Oct. Don H has seen a pair on his property at Teal Valley, Ben K has noticed their presence at Kina.

**Long-tailed cuckoo:** Oct, Grace S has heard one near Waterhouse Reserve and in a gum tree along Richmond hills.

### **Christmas is a coming and the goose is getting fat.**

Not sure if David will be offering goose at our end of year BBQ but come along on 7 December and enjoy convivial company. The conversation doesn't have to be entirely avian themed but I'm sure there'll be a fair whack of it! Details in accompanying email.

### **PROGRAMME 2015**

We meet **usually** on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7.15 pm in the "Solander Fisheries Building", Cross Quay, off Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). All birders are welcome! Contact: Don Cooper 03-544 8109 or Gail 03-5450456.

**Note:** no indoor evening meeting for December, and January.  
February indoor meeting to be advised.

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for December newsletter by 15<sup>th</sup>, please email, snailmail, or phone:  
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