



## NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER

**OCTOBER 2017**

Regional Representative :

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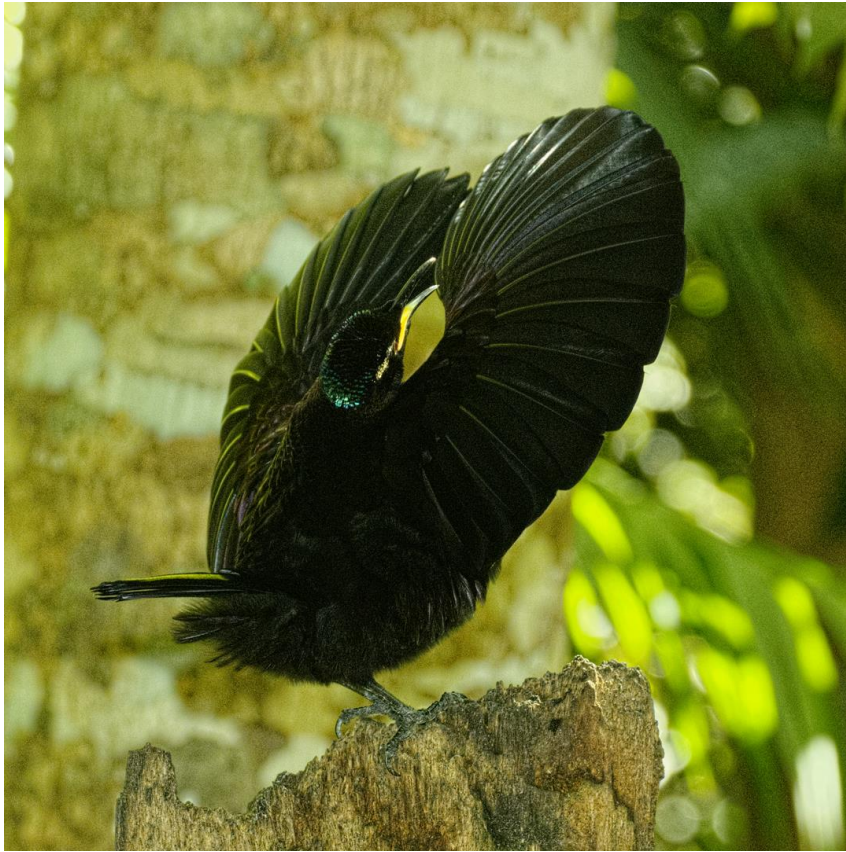
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**RECENTLY** we engaged in some required pruning of the front section's shrubs and trees, and discovered two old waxeye nests. I'm pleased I have evidence of their breeding presence. And shortly after I heard the lusty song of a waxeye at the back door and hope that I've appeased both City Council and waxeyes with what shrubbery there is left.

Victoria's Riflebird, Atherton Tablelands, photo Rebecca Bowater 2017



And, another shot of this marvellous display. Photo Rebecca Bowater 2017



### SHAG PILE

No, nothing to do with plush wool carpet, but a build up of guana is a sure indication of shags roosting. **Pied shags** have several small breeding colonies locally, Haulashore Is, Delaware Spit, Greenslade Park, Little Kaiteriteri, in numbers less than 20 individuals. Look for **little shags** and **black shags** among them. **Spotted shags** in Tasman Bay came in close for winter roosting on Fifeshire Rock, Haulashore Mole and Pepin Is, and again, in small groups **little blacks** have been back in the Waimea Est, Rabbit Island and Motueka Est., (noted there in April,) and the most recent in Waimea Est, 3 Oct (WC). Occasionally they can be spotted in Nelson Harbour. Then of course, there are the stone spitting **spotted shags** of Tata Islands in Golden Bay, and **black shags** up some of our rivers. Keep your eyes open for any other roosting or breeding areas and send me your sightings, I don't need any shag piles thanks. This coming Monday 6 November Rob Schuckard will give us a talk on **King Shags** and Salmon Farming.

### OUT AND ABOUT:

On 21 August I spotted a **white heron** in the shallows of Motueka River just to one side of the Kohatu Bridge. Had it been in the area all winter or was it on the way down south? Further to Chris's comment on **robin** seen at Parapara, the first time for years, Ingrid tells of encountering a robin near Pupu Springs, in June, hopping under a wattle tree, the first time a robin's been noticed in that area for many years. She also commented that there were also a rather larger number of **fantails** (over 20) buzzing around the access road.

In the Waimea Est Willie spotted a **gull-billed tern** in breeding dress on 14 Oct.

End of Sept, wood duck count 24, at Playhouse pond. No ducklings sighted as yet.



Photo Rebecca Bowater 2017

### **FALCONS OVERHEAD**

Spotting **falcons** throughout the year seems to be now routine among urban members, from Atawhai, The Grampians through to Richmond, in-between and beyond. But the top story comes from Paul B in Anniseed Valley where he witnessed three falcons working together to cause havoc amongst his flock of pigeons, end of Sept. Read about a recent urban study of falcons in Dunedin through our OSNZ website.

### **FIRST CALLS**

#### **From Golden Bay**

“Yesterday 28 August, I heard my first **blackbird** singing, not in the middle of the night but during a sunny spell after rain. Thus morning, however it was barely light when one was singing away” (CP) Coincides with an Atawhai bird tuning up during the last week of August. GDQ. A pair of **NZ dabchick** have again been recorded at Lake Killarney in the Takaka township, by Helen K. but will have to endure man made access improvements being made to this popular picnic spot.

#### **This side of the Hill**

Willie was out early on 4 Sept and reported some of the first **godwits** (adults) back in the Waimea Estuary. Juveniles came later. (first two at Foxton on 1 October right on time PB). Not swallows but **shining cuckoos** herald the arrival of spring this hemisphere. Lorraine A. heard her first from lower slopes of Grampians on Sept 27. Other early reports came from Rabbit Is, Kina, Anniseed Valley, and the earliest 19 Sept Ruby Bay.

## **FERNBIRDS**

Early August, From Grace S,:

Last week Brian & I were cycling along the cycleway by the by-pass, and just near the Honest Lawyer we both heard the "chip" of a fernbird in a thin screen of shrubbery between us and the edge of the estuary. We both stopped simultaneously and 'mouthed' " fernbird!" to each other. So, both heard it, but didn't stop long enough to see it.

Early next year, From Ingrid:

"The Tasman Environment Trust and "Battle for Banded Rail" team are planning a fernbird survey for early next year. I will help them run the project and look after the data analysis and report writing etc. The aim is to get a better understanding of the distribution of fernbirds in the Waimea Estuary. Due to their cryptic nature, there have been very few fernbird surveys in the past, so this could be an exciting opportunity!

All going well we should be able to do the survey (using playback) in 1 week in January/February, and the idea is to involve as many keen volunteers as possible. Tracey Murray (B4BR) will be looking after organizing the volunteers. Meanwhile, please let me know if you are keen to be involved in the field survey (even if only for a day or two) - it would be great to have some experienced birders with local knowledge among the teams."

## **GOOD NEWS FROM ROBIN AND SANDY**

After 7 years of monitoring the translocated kiwi in the Flora, we've had a really special experience. We went to do a transmitter harness check on Te Hapu, a sub-adult who was translocated from Gouland Downs (that's him in my right arm) and were very happy to find him in a burrow with a second sub-adult kiwi. She was incredibly shiny and healthy looking and we caught up with them in the Grecian, so we named her Hebe after the Greek goddess for eternal youth. The really exciting thing is that we don't know who she is – almost certainly bred in the Flora, but given how sub-adults can move, she could be the offspring of any of the translocated birds or possibly unknown adults. This is the first time we've found a sub-adult other than with transmitted parents, so a real celebration day for Friends of Flora's kiwi reintroduction project.



## **TRAVELLING AND LONGEVITY - BAND, TAG AND FLAG SPOTTING**

**Bar-tailed Godwit J4** has been well tracked for nine years. Originally banded in Victoria, resighting records initially came from Christchurch end of 2009, then J4 moved to Tasman Bay 2010 and has been spotted seasonally moving to and from the Waimea Estuary to Apeado – Mokpo in South Korea ever since.

Willie has noted two banded **redbilled gulls**, their history being banded in Kaikoura, as chicks nearly 30 years ago.

## **ANNUAL SURVEY OF VOC BREEDING PAIRS ON RABBIT IS. FRONT BEACH.**

Willie Cook & Don Cooper commenced the survey on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Oct. in ideal weather conditions at 3pm approximately an hour before H.T. The area covered started at the Mapua channel entrance and finished on the extreme eastern end near the back channel.

A total of 18 pairs were seen in the 6 sections we divide the area into. These breeding pairs are concentrated mainly on the extreme west or east sections for good reasons, public activity plus unsuitable beach conditions where the area of beach is likely to be affected by the highest tides.

8 pairs were in the western section and 10 on the eastern end. 20 birds were banded but only in 4 pairs where both birds banded. 11 of the birds were recorded as chicks making the oldest of these 12 years. In the case of the birds banded as adults some could be 20 years plus.

What we have noted the pairs banded do not always remain with the same banded bird.

Last year 15 pairs were present at this time but only 3 chicks were recorded, only one was banded during the entire nesting period. A series of very high tides accompanied rough seas washed out successive re-nesting. (Don Cooper)

## **PROGRAMME 2017**

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.

**Monday 6 November**  
**Indoor meeting**

**Rob Schuckard - King Shags v Aquaculture**

**December get-together to be advised.**

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for December newsletter please email, snailmail, or phone:

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