

# TARA

Newsletter of Auckland Region OSNZ  
www.osnz.org.nz

November 2006

## Bird report proposed

A new proposal for gathering and publishing members' birding records is proposed by the OSNZ's scientific committee.

In a recent email to regional reps, the chair of the scientific committee, Dr Paul Scofield, said that the committee and the Council of OSNZ had been wrestling for some time with the development of a suitable replacement for Classified Summarised Notes (CSN). (CSN are adhoc bird observations and records from members, traditionally printed as part of *Notornis*, once or twice a year - Ed).

"We have been looking for a method that will allow members to publish their records and at the same time allow us to use recent advances in the internet technology, to provide a useful, high quality product that would inform members", he said.

They had hoped to use a GIS-based website being developed by Landcare Research with funding by DOC's Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Fund. Unfortunately, that was not possible as their task massive and ongoing.

Council was acutely aware that members wanted a replacement as soon as possible, but the problems



**An Intermediate Egret visited the Waatarua Wetland in November. This is the first record of this vagrant in Auckland. See story page 6. (Photo: Suzi Phillips)**

had been in wanting whatever was adopted to be "future proof" and to provide good value for members' money.

**To this end, Council recently voted to fund and produce an annual New Zealand Bird Report (NZBR) that could include the present Rare Birds Report and CSN, as well as the annual reports of the Society's schemes.**

The NZBR would be distributed to all members annually, as an insert with the posting of *Notornis*. As with all OSNZ schemes, the new publication would need an editor with the drive and initiative to ensure

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## Auckland OSNZ December Meeting

Tuesday 5th December 7.30pm

**'Petrels at Bethell's Beach - what changes have occurred in the past 18 years?' with Graeme Taylor**

Graeme's talk will be followed by our traditional end of year party with a quiz, wine, and other festive fare - please bring a plate. All welcome !

**Our venue is in the Natural Sciences Building at Unitec in Pt Chevalier.**

**For directions and map, contact Suzi Phillips on 021-271-2527**

# NZ Dotterel numbers steady in Auckland

The Auckland region's New Zealand Dotterel post-breeding flock count resulted in a total of 663 birds in April.

This regional total was about 39 per cent of the total northern New Zealand dotterel population, said count co-ordinator John Dowding.

"There were no major changes in flock size, although there were several cases this year of flocks having smaller numbers of birds than usual on the census days, after recording higher totals earlier in the season."

Examples include Whitford, which had its highest ever total (43) on the 13 February, but only 19 birds were present on 01 April. At Clarks Bay shell banks, numbers fell from 30 on 19 March to 16 on 01 April. There is not normally that much movement by early April, he said.

Mangawhai continued to be the largest flock in the Auckland region and one of the top two or three in the world.

In two areas, there were signs of gradual changes in the relative size of neighbouring flocks. In the Hauraki Gulf, numbers on Motuihe appeared to be rising steadily at the expense of Browns Island, said Dr Dowding.

On Great Barrier Island, the number of birds in the Kaitoke/Palmers flock seemed to be growing, while the number at Whangapoua was falling.

The new Dotterel Recovery Plan due to be published soon, identifies "key" flocking sites as those that regularly have 30 birds or more.

The Auckland region has five sites that clearly fit this criterion (Papanui, Tabora, Mangawhai, Omaha, and Whangapoua GBI). There were several others on the borderline, such as Whitford, Browns Island and Mataitai, which had all averaged about 30 birds over the past 5 years, he said.

The other threshold in the recovery plan is the new 1 per cent level of 17 or more birds - this identifies a site as being of international significance for the subspecies in terms of the Ramsar Convention. There are about 15 sites in this category in the Auckland region at present.

"Many thanks to the large number of people who took part in this year's counts; all the usual OSNZ stalwarts and a very good turn-out from DOC (thanks to Rosalie Stamp), which was a huge help with the island sites.

"These counts provide a really valuable annual snapshot of the status of New Zealand dotterels during the rather long intervals between national census, he said. "Particular thanks to Gwenda Pulham, Tony Habraken and Rosalie Stamp for all their organisation."

A copy of the full details of the Auckland region NZD post-breeding flock count is available on request from Auckland RR, Suzi Phillips.



*Female NZ Dotterel feeding at low tide.  
(Photo: Suzi Phillips)*

## Bird report proposed to replace CSN

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that NZBR is produced. Council is keen to hear from any member who wishes to take on the task.

It was hoped that Regional Recorders would still vet records, but members would be encouraged to submit their records electronically to a Web-based database, (currently being developed), that would be accessible via the Society's main website.

Records submitted electronically would be sorted by region and sent to regional recorders to vet. This would speed the digitization of records and hopefully reduce the work involved in editing the report.

"We recognise that not all members have computers and that Regional Recorders may be required to digitize records that are not submitted electronically.

"The Scientific Committee is keen to receive comments from RR's and Regional Recorders, in the first instance, to enable the database product and design of the NZ Bird Report to be as sympathetic to members' needs as possible.

"I hope you will agree that the New Zealand Bird Report is a great innovation and will allow OSNZ to better serve members' needs," said Dr Scofield.



*A North Island Robin chick in safe hands. (Photo: Karen Colgan).*

# Birdlife thriving in the Ark

The translocation of Stitchbird (Hihi) from Tiritiri Matangi to the Ark in the Park is on track for February next year.

No further evidence of the deadly Salmonella strain has been detected on Tiritiri and Hihi numbers seem to be about the same as for the Karori Sanctuary transfer - 118 in the pre-breeding census.

"Both of these are potentially limiting factors, but are looking good so far," says ARK spokesperson, John Sumich. "The translocation will mirror the Karori transfer in most ways with two transfers of up to 30 birds each, mixed sex, mainly young birds, but some older males too."

The first release is scheduled for February 14, followed by a second one in March or April.

During his Royal Society Teaching Fellowship year, local ecologist, John Staniland, is replicating aspects of Troy Mekan's MSc thesis on forest complexity done on Hauturu and Kapiti. This is primarily to study the range of food available to the Hihi.

Nest boxes and supplementary feeders are also being installed in the Hihi release area, to encourage the Hihi to settle there.

Five pairs of North Island Robins (Toutouwai) have been found so far in the Ark area this season and to date have produced seven fledglings - all banded, says ARK spokesperson, Karen Colgan. The fledglings are being fed by the parent birds, mainly the male.

Four of the females from last year are in approximately the same territories. Three of these females have attracted new males and two of these males were not seen since the translocation in 2005. The other male is an unbanded bird (a fledgling from last year already breeding successfully).

Other Robins being monitored in the area include a pair on the Auckland City Walk, and a new pair that includes the last banded female which has flown from upper Andersons to the Whatitiri Track area to join a new male in the past month.

There was also one solo unbanded bird seen in the past month and another singing in the middle of R Block

The ARK has had a steady supply of overseas students who have been able to monitor the birds again this year. They also help to detect nests and assist with banding in some instances. Students have come from Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan.

Four Whiteheads (Popokatea) were seen recently by trampers on the Muir track up the Pararaha Valley, south of Karekare. The trampers are familiar with Whiteheads from their forays down country, so this can be counted as a reliable sighting.

Fortunately the area where they were spotted is being targeted with pest control of rats and stoats by the Friends of Whatipu this season.

The Friends project aims to extend the protection of shore nesting birds on the Whatipu coast and this season with the aid of funding from the ASB Trust, started control along the cliff-tops to create a buffer zone against predators and their known entry points down to the beach.

Popokatea are still being heard fairly frequently close to the release site at the start of the Auckland City Walk, and occasionally further afield within the Ark.

"There is a whitehead calling strongly from a tree next to the No 8 fairway of the golf course. There were earlier two or three in this area. I strongly suspect that this is a male whose mate is nesting nearby and he is announcing his occupancy," says John Staniland.

Kaka are being heard most mornings and often through the night by Riki Bennett the resident ranger at the Cascades. A group of 10 Kaka were observed a couple of months ago, so again they are present for far longer now, than in the years before intensive pest control.

Rangers report a very early first Shining Cuckoo

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# Bird numbers increase in Cornwall Park

By Michael Taylor

It is ten years since our last survey of the birds in Cornwall Park. Hence it was timely to repeat this exercise with the count that took place on Saturday 28 October.

We operated in pairs: Suzi Phillips and John Simmons, Ken Bond and Michael Soter, Barbara Hughes and Mike Cleland, Michael Taylor and Caroline Parker, using the division of the park into conveniently sized areas that Doug Booth had decreed in 1996. The tally is for all birds positively identified by sight or sound.

**A total of 1038 birds of 24 kinds resulted (26 species if the feral chooks and guinea fowl are included) and of the likely list only white-faced heron was absent.**

**Introduced:** We found more of most of the common species, but fewer Finches and only about half the number of Sparrows, though these are still numerous and widespread in the park. Blackbirds were abundant with a total count of 352 (where are they all nesting?). We also saw lots of Thrushes: 84 compared with 10 last time. We found several extra species, but Yellowhammers were missing on this occasion.

**Native:** Native birds appear to be doing well in the park, especially Tuis of which we counted 39 as against 5 in the 1996 survey. This time we found many more Welcome Swallows, though fewer Silvereyes and Grey Warblers. We were glad to see Kereru and to get the Shining Cuckoo on three of our four lists.

Paradise Shelducks have arrived in recent years. During the public Bird Walk on October 11th we had watched a family group, but sadly there was no sign of their eight ducklings, although the adult pair was present.

Readers of Metro magazine may have seen the feature on users of Cornwall Park in the September issue where Michael Taylor appeared as 'Birdwatcher' in recognition of walks that he and Ken Bond lead in the programme which interprets aspects of the park to the public.

These walks take place twice a year and usually attract a friendly crowd of 15 to 20 people who welcome our guidance. They appreciate the Park's nicely produced birdlife brochure which carries a set of pictures and includes the results of the OSNZ surveys.

## Introduced Species (15)

	28 Oct 06	28 Sep 96
Blackbird	352	172
Californian Quail	15	--
Chaffinch	26	49
Goldfinch	16	42
Greenfinch	21	40
House Sparrow	99	209
Magpie	14	21
Myna	31	17
Pheasant	12	--
Rock pigeon	57	35
Rosella	72	33
Skylark	4	--
Song Thrush	84	10
Spotted Dove	3	--
Starling	82	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>661</b>

## Native Species (9)

	28 Oct 06	28 Sep 96
Fantail	2	2
Grey Warbler	13	26
Kingfisher	11	6
NZ Pigeon/Kereru	8	--
Paradise Shelduck	8	--
Shining Cuckoo	3	--
Silvereye	27	37
Tui	39	5
Welcome Swallow	39	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>88</b>



Paradise Shelduck at Cornwall Park  
(Photo: Suzi Phillips).



Kereru in Cabbage Tree (Photo: Suzi Phillips)



*Royal Spoonbills in flight above the Tauhoa River, Kaipara Harbour. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).*

## Spring sightings around Auckland

24 September      Kaipara Harbour launch trip out the Hoteo River-mouth, (outgoing tide), around Moturemu Island and up Tauhoa River. On the way there we saw several hundred **Black Swans** in flight away from us across the sea and a pair of **Caspian Terns** on the spit at Moturemu (as well as two pair Mallards). Up the Tauhoa River we flushed a group of seven **Royal Spoonbills**. We continued up to Stables Landing then turned around and potted slowly and quietly back down, encountering the group again on a small island in the middle of the river. They flew across the river and perched in a large riverside bare-branched tree nearby and eventually back to the island. The skipper said this group was resident in the area outside the mouth of the Hoteo River last year and has moved into the Tauhoa River this year. Suzi Phillips.

26 September      **Common Tern (Sterna hirundo)** seen at Whatipu by Mike and Sharen Graham, during beach cleanup. Appeared very tired, ruffled and preening a lot, sitting on a large tree stump on the beach. Slept for about an hour then flew out to sea to join about 800 White-fronted Terns feeding just off-shore. Very distinctive, especially wide tail with streamers and grey breast. Also seen there on the same day, 2 pairs of **NZ Dotterel**, **2 Golden Plover**, **2 Banded Dotterel**, and **one Australasian Bittern** plus beach wrecked birds such as Shy Mollymawk, Gannet, Fairy Prion, and Shearwater species.

1 October      Gwenda Pulham and Phil Hammond went to the south end of Big Sand Island and saw; SIPO c850, VOC 9, Little Tern 6 (1 in breeding plumage), Fairy Tern 2, Godwit c1500, Red Knot c500, NZ Dotterel 4, Turnstone 55, Wrybill 58, Curlew Sandpiper 1 (non breeding plumage), Southern Black-backed Gull 19, Black-billed Gull 8, Caspian Tern 5, Golden Plover 10 (in various stages of moult), Banded Dotterel 1. Gwenda also saw a medium size tern, but was too busy with bands to stop and identify it. Definitely not Gull-billed Tern, and probably a Common Tern, she says. Plenty of bands and flags on the BT Godwits which GP will be reporting, including flags from China, Australia, and New Zealand.

Early October      **Shining Cuckoo** calling at night. This bird was heard at 11 pm and again at 11:30 pm by Ros Rothschild (former OS member) at Green Bay, in early October 2006. There was no street lighting, but clear moonlight. The cuckoo gave a clear series of whistles, though without the 'final' descending note. The Long-tailed Cuckoo commonly calls during the hours of darkness, but are any readers aware of Shining Cuckoos doing so? Michael Taylor.

19 October      **Shining cuckoos** in central Auckland at Western Springs Park, western end of the main lake where there are very tall eucalypts. Wednesday evening I was able to whistle them into within three metres and watched one (maybe two), of them eating caterpillars and moths and flitting back and forth to my whistles, for 15 minutes with perfect 6pm sunlight behind to show their colours. Phil Hammond.

**Continued on pages 7 and 10**

# Drought may explain increased vagrant sightings



*The Intermediate Egret at the Waiatarua Wetland Reserve in November.*



*(Photos: Copyright Suzi Phillips 2006)*

For many keen bird watchers, spring 2006 in New Zealand may well be remembered for the number of sightings of Australian birds.

In recent months, these include the Intermediate Egret seen in Auckland, a Little Egret in Wellington, a Spine-tailed Swift in Stewart Island, Glossy Ibis at Haast, Christchurch and Blenheim, and a Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike on Kapiti Island.

Australia is in the grip of a severe drought - the big dry is said to be the worst in more than 100 years, particularly in areas of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

The drought has spread gradually over eastern and southern Australia this year, but has intensified in recent months, according to Australia's Bureau of Meteorology.

In the historical record dating from 1900, it was the driest August to October period averaged across South Australia, the second driest averaged over Victoria and the Murray Darling Basin, and the third driest for New South Wales.

It has also been remarkably warm in Australia during the past three months, with mean maximum temperatures being easily the highest on record (for the post-1950 era).

The Intermediate Egret seen by Auckland birders at the Waiatarua Wetland Reserve near Remuera in early November, may well be a refugee from Australia's Big Dry.

A strong northerly was the prevailing wind the week before the first sighting of the Egret at the wetland.

It was first reported there by Alan Emmerson and Ian McLean on November 11, and many Auckland birders have visited the wetland this month to see the bird.

It appears to be settled there and was feeding well. It is only about the 10th record of this vagrant species

**in New Zealand. Suzi Phillips**

## Inaugural student prize to joint winners

Two Auckland college students are joint winners of the inaugural Auckland OSNZ Student Prize.

They both win a place on the Miranda Naturalists' Trust Summer Field Course that runs from January 9 to 14, as well as a year's student membership to OSNZ.

The winners are Elizabeth Job from Pakuranga College and Rosemarie Keen from Diocesan School for Girls - both Year 12 students. Runners up were Rebecca Short and Isabelle Kember, who each receive a year's student membership to OSNZ.

The week-long Miranda field course includes daily field trips and talks on coastal marine ecology, botany, birding photography, coastal and wading

birds, and practical skills such as mist-netting, processing and banding land birds, as well as cannon netting of waders for banding and research.

The winners were selected by a panel from Auckland OSNZ, and the student memberships were sponsored by the national council of OSNZ.

The girls have been invited to the Auckland branch evening Christmas meeting to receive their prize in a brief awards ceremony. (December 5th).

Our thanks to Michael Taylor for his generous sponsorship towards the prize.

"This is a great opportunity for young people interested in birds to broaden their knowledge and explore the opportunities for working with birds in the future," says Auckland RR, Suzi Phillips.

# Authorities find invasive pest

Biosecurity New Zealand is hoping that two Red-vented Bulbuls eliminated in Devonport recently are the last in Auckland.

Bird watchers are asked to keep a watch for these distinctive startling-size birds and report any sightings.

Authorities were concerned that this species could again establish a population in Auckland that could affect native vegetation and birdlife in the region.

The Red-vented Bulbul, recognised as a seriously invasive pest, is native to parts of Asia, and has been introduced to a number of Pacific Islands from escaped cage birds.

Globally, it is listed as one of the top 100 invasive species, as it is known to cause significant damage to fruit and vegetable crops, and aggressively chase and attack other birds.

Bulbul will feed on native fruits, berries, insects, flower nectar, seeds and buds, displacing species such as Kereru by their aggressive and competitive nature.

In the 1950s, a small population of about 50 Red-vented Bulbuls became established between Takapuna and Mt Eden after some were released from a ship.

It took until 1955 for them to be eradicated and since the late 1960s, it has been illegal to import them.

It is not known how the recent birds arrived in Auckland, but they may have been released from a yacht or ship arriving in Auckland from elsewhere in



*This Red-vented Bulbul was seen in Noumea, where they have become established as pests. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).*

the Pacific.

Biosecurity NZ is working with the Department of Conservation and the Auckland Regional Council to track and eradicate any Red-vented Bulbuls.

Ph 0800 80 99 66 to report a sighting location.

## Spring sightings around Auckland - Continued from page 5

**22 October** John Simmons and Gwenda Pulham were at Mangawhai Sandspit an hour after high tide. They saw; c300 mixed **Godwit, Knot and Turnstone** were well into roosting mode at their usual site, which was 150 metres to the north. "42 Godwit appeared from nowhere and dropped down almost in front of us. A quick head count with naked eye, then scope onto legs. It was then that I realised that every single Godwit in the group was a juvenile! About five birds roosted immediately, but the rest of them foraged frantically, racing about on a substrate that I would not have considered Godwit foraging habitat at all. After 15 minutes they took flight again and headed south along the coast. A flock of spotties-heading somewhere, a neat sight!!" Gwenda Pulham.

**25 October** Had two **Kookaburras** fly across the road while driving from Warkworth to Leigh. Great birds. One heading for the Ascension vineyards, the other towards Heron's Flight Vineyard. Chris Gaskin.

**28/29 October** I was on Tiri with the Entomological Society on Friday and Saturday and saw a white-rumped martin flying with the swallows around the lighthouse on both Friday evening and Saturday morning. After consulting my field guide I am pretty sure it was an **Australian Fairy Martin**. Unfortunately I never got a good look at the head which would have given me a certain identification, but the Fairy Martin has a much brighter white rump than the Tree Martin, and that is why I am going for this species. I have seen both species in Australia. Alan Emmerson

**4 November** During an Auckland Botanical Society visit to Rotoroa Island (near Waiheke Island), Paul Asquith had the following list of sightings; Blue Penguin, Australasian Gannet, Little Shag (pied phase), White Faced Heron, Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Harrier, Pheasant, **Weka**, Pukeko, Variable Oystercatcher, Spur Winged Plover, Southern Black-Backed Gull, Red Billed Gull, White-Fronted Tern, Eastern Rosella, Morepork. Kingfisher, Welcome Swallow, Grey Warbler, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Fantail, Tui, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Gold Finch Starling, Myna, White Backed Magpie. Also seen there that day were Yellowhammer, Kereru, and a **Shining Cuckoo** was heard. (Ewen Cameron).

STORM CAST SEA BIRDS ON MURIWAI BEACH FROM AUGUST 2005 TO JULY 2006. Convenor:John Simmons	August 2005	September 2005	October 2005	November 2005	December 2005	January 2006	February 2006	March 2006	April 2006	May 2006	June 2006	July 2006	TOTALS	
Wandering Albatross						Beach patrol does not take place during the month of January					1		1	
Royal Albatross										1				1
Black-browed Albatross					1									1
Buller Albatross									1					1
Flesh-footed Shearwater					1									1
Wedge-tailed Shearwater				1										1
Bullers Shearwater			2	4	3			1	1		2			13
Sooty Shearwater				11	10			1	4		10	3		39
Short-tailed Shearwater					1						3			4
Fluttering Shearwater					1			1	1		1		5	9
Huttons Shearwater			1	6	2				4		5	1	2	21
Little Shearwater					1			2		1	1			5
Common Diving Petrel	1				1						2			4
Grey Petrel			1											1
Westland Petrel									1					1
White-chinned Petrel											1			1
Kerquelen Petrel											1			1
Petrel species.					2									2
Cape Pigeon (Petrel )			1	1									2	4
Antarctic Fulmar			1	2	2									5
Northern Giant Petrel	1								1					2
Fairy Prion				1	2			1		1	1		19	25
Antarctic Prion													1	1
Prion species				1										1
Blue Petrel			2										1	3
Cooks Petrel					3				1	8				12
Mottled Petrel								1	6					7
Grey-faced Petrel		1			1				2					4
White-headed Petrel			1	18	1					2				22
Little Blue Penguin	17	4						2	1	3	15	1	4	47
Australasian Gannet	1		2	2	8				2		2	3	6	26
Pied Shag	1			1							1			3
Little Black Shag	1													1
Variable Oystercatcher				1	1								2	
Southern Black-backed Gull							2			3	1	3	9	
White Fronted Tern		2											2	
Mallard												1	1	
Racing Pigeon ( AAK 166 )					1								1	
Starling											1		1	
Magpie											1		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>287</b>	
Kilometers covered	30.0	27.2	24.0	30.4	30.4		22.4	27.2	27.2	35.0	27.2	31.2	312.2	
Members Attending	8	6	7	9	11		6	8	9	12	8	11		

# Sound anchoring to keep Kokako in Hunuas

**An innovative new birdsong technique being trialled in the Kokako Management Area will hopefully make new birds feel at home in the Hunua Ranges.**

Fourteen North Island Kokako (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*), from Mapara in the King Country were translocated by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) to the Hunua Ranges during August and September.

This translocation will strengthen and boost the existing remnant population of Kokako, consisting of about ten pairs, which is managed and protected in the Hunua Regional Park.

Sound recordings from Mapara are played for an hour at dawn and dusk to 'anchor' the new birds (six females and four males), to their new home.

DOC Auckland Area Manager Beau Fraser says, "Kokako from different areas have different dialects, so it is important to integrate the birds carefully and give them a feeling of familiarity by using their own song."

This methodology, known as 'sound anchoring' has been successfully used in the northern Urewera Ranges with several pairs of Kokako establishing in the area around the sound anchoring point.

It is hoped that offspring of the new birds will mate with the birds that are already established in the Hunua Kokako Management Area and strengthen the genetic diversity of the population.

The offspring may learn the local dialect and culturally assimilate with the Hunua birds.

"The ARC initiated this programme in 1993 and is very proud of the progress being made and being



**Kokako (Photo: Suzi Phillips)**

instrumental in rescuing the Hunua Kokako population from certain extinction," says ARC Chairman Mike Lee.

Intensive management in Mapara has resulted in 73 pairs of Kokako in the 1400ha sanctuary, allowing this gift to Hunua being made by Ngati Maniapoto from Mapara to the tangata whenua of Hunua; Ngati Paoa, Ngai Tai o Umupuia and Ngati Tama Oho.

The Hunua Kokako population was down to one breeding female in 1994, but has increased to about ten breeding pairs after ten years of active management. This programme is a partnership between the Department of Conservation and the Auckland Regional Council.

## Muriwai Beach Patrolers

Members who participated in the Muriwai Beach Patrols (see opposite) were;

Chris Ashton, Enid Asquith, Mark Asquith, Paul Asquith, Robyn Asquith, Richard Baker, Lynette Beech, Judy Bendall, Ken Bond, Simon Chamberlin, Gillian Eller, Alan Emmerson, Mike Graham, Sharon Graham, Sharon Kast, Eliane Lagnaz, Ian McLean, Gordon McKenzie, Kevin Pearson, Jonathan Pote, John Simmons, Michael Soter, Emma Stanyard, Helen Tredwith, Lynda Underhill, David Wilson.

## Ark birds thriving

*Continued from page 3*

(Pipiwhauraroa) of the year this year and there are certainly heaps of them about.

Tomtits (Miromiro) are also far more numerous in the ARK area than in the 1980s, says John Staniland who used to run a survey for OSNZ in the Waitakeres.

Recent surveys in the ARK in the Park area of the Waitakere Ranges by Tomtit researcher, Barbara Hughes, have also shown that the increase in Tomtits in this area is widespread and significant.

**Suzi Phillips**

## NZ Falcon Sighting in Auckland

The NZ Falcon(s) seen in recent years in Birkenhead and Beachaven, has been sighted again.

Beachaven resident and Auckland OS member, Jo Knight, has seen the Falcon again, this time near the coast at Island Bay and heading inland towards the large reserve area at Birkdale. It was between 2-3pm on Sunday 3 September. Jo says she has seen it several times around that time of day, and also at dusk.



*Wrybills on the sand at ManuKapua on the Kaipara Harbour. (Photos: Suzi Phillips).*

## Old Mangere Sewage Ponds

Ray Clough found his first **NZ Dotterel** nest for this season at the ponds with three eggs on 25 August. It was in a "no-public-access" area.

Wrybill numbers at the same place are considerably down with only 201 on 25 August and only 12 in breeding plumage.

Both Ray, and Gwenda Pulham have repeatedly seen a pair of **Black-fronted Dotterels** foraging and copulating along the muddy edges of the Tidal Storage Basin near Puketutu Island, usually two hours after a high tide when water in the Basin is at its minimum. If anyone sees where they fly to, when they quit the Basin, please let Ray know by phoning him on 634 2959.



**Cattle Egrets** were seen on the South Kaipara Peninsula on Saturday 26 August, when a minimum of 18 and maximum of 22 were spotted at Evans Road by John Simmons and Gwenda Pulham.

## Auckland branch - Ornithological Society of New Zealand

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in the **Environmental Sciences Building** in the grounds of **Unitec on Carrington Road in Point Chevalier**. Enter via Gate 1 or 3 and follow signs to building 23. There is ample free parking. (Map available from Suzi). Admission donation is \$3.

### VISITORS AND FRIENDS ALWAYS WELCOME

#### Regional Representative and 'TARA' Editor:

Suzi Phillips, Ph 09-479-5395 or email [suzi@dialogue.co.nz](mailto:suzi@dialogue.co.nz)

#### Regional Recorders : **Landbirds, Waterfowl & Rails**

Mel Galbraith, Ph 480-1958 (a/hours) or [melgar@ihug.co.nz](mailto:melgar@ihug.co.nz)  
62 Holyoake Place, Birkenhead, Auckland

#### **Waders, Herons, Spoonbill & Egrets**

Adrian Riegen, Ph 814-9741 Email [riegen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:riegen@xtra.co.nz)  
231 Forest Hill Rd, R.D.1, Henderson, Auckland

#### **Seabirds, Gulls, Terns & Shags**

John Simmons, Ph 828-8642. [johnsimmons@clear.net.nz](mailto:johnsimmons@clear.net.nz),  
4 Bamford Place, Avondale, Auckland 1007.

#### Census and Surveys

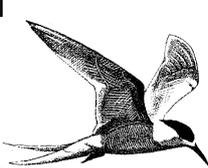
All members are invited to take part in the OSNZ Auckland branch census and surveys that take place during the year. There are always experienced regulars on these trips and they welcome new members to get involved in identifying and recording the birds. For wader and shorebird counts, the group usually meets about two hours before high tide. Contact the organiser (whose name and phone number appears alongside the survey or census date) to find out what time and where to meet.

# Auckland OSNZ Activities Programme 2007

- January 1-31** **National Twitchathon** competition for the most birds seen in any 24 hours in January. Teams of two or more birders. For more information or to register, email Brent on [brent@wrybill-tours.com](mailto:brent@wrybill-tours.com). Can you equal or beat the Auckland record of 100 species !?
- January 23** **Tuesday 6pm. Summer Picnic.** Meet at the Kauri Point Centennial Park entry at the end of Chelsea View Drive in Birkenhead. From there it is an easy 10 minute walk down to Kendall Bay. After a picnic dinner, Mel Galbraith will tell us about the plans for a sanctuary in this area and lead us on a walk around the loop track. Bring your picnic and join us for an entertaining summer evening.
- February 6** **Tuesday 7.30pm.** Our guest speaker is Luis Ortiz Catedral who returns this summer to continue his work researching **Kakariki ecology on Tiritiri Matangi Island.**
- February 10** **Saturday - Muriwai Beach Patrol,** phone John Simmons on 828-8642.
- February 17** **Saturday at 10am.** We are hosting the Waikato Branch of OSNZ, for their visit to see waders in the **Mangere Ponds area.** High tide is at 10.25am. Come and meet these keen birders from the Waikato, led this trip by Betty Sneddon. We meet at the Puketutu Is. end of the causeway. For more information, phone Suzi Phillips.
- March 6** **Tuesday 7.30pm.** Our guest speaker is Dr Colin Miskelly talking on '**Snipe - New Zealand's bird of myth and mystery**'. Colin has worked on the conservation of NZ's Snipe for more than 20 years and was involved in the rediscovery of the Campbell Island Snipe in 1997. Unitec venue.
- March 10** **Saturday - Muriwai Beach Patrol,** contact John Simmons on 828-8642
- March 18-25** **New Zealand Dotterel Post Breeding Flock Count.** The week of March 18 to 25 is set aside for this count at beaches around the Auckland region. OSNZ volunteers are aided by staff from the DOC and ARC. (See story page 2).  
Volunteers please contact Gwenda Pulham on 480-5535.
- March 24/25** **Tiritiri Matangi Island Survey.** To volunteer phone Sharen Graham on 817-5537.
- April 3** **Tuesday 7.30pm.** Chris Bindon will introduce and show us a remarkable film called "Waterfowl and Wetlands: A NZ Odyssey" by wildlife photographer and scientist Chris Thomas of Wellington. Seven years in the making, the film describes the five wetland types and shows the country's five main Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance, as well as wetland birds and waterfowl. Not to be missed.
- April 6 to 9** **Easter Weekend Trip to Great Barrier Island.** Join us for a birding trip around the island, staying in backpacker type accommodation. We will explore many of the good birding sites including the wetlands at Kaitoke and Whangapoua estuary. For more details and booking information, contact Suzi Phillips (see opposite).
- April 14** **Saturday - Muriwai Beach Patrol,** contact John Simmons on 828-8642
- April 22** Sunday 10am. City Wetland and Waterfowl Walk with Chris Bindon starting at Tahua Torea and ending at Waiaatarua Wetland off Grand Drive. For more information contact Chris on 833-6363.
- April 25** **South Kaipara Lakes Dabchick Survey,** contact Judy Bendall on 09420-2734
- May 1** **Tuesday 7.30pm.** Evening meeting with **our guest speaker Simon Fordham** talking on "Birding in Australia." Unitec venue.
- May 12** **Saturday Muriwai Beach Patrol,** Contact John Simmons on 828-8642.
- June 5** Evening meeting - speaker to be confirmed.
- June 9** Saturday, Mangawhai Wader Census, High tide 13.30, 3m.
- June 9** Saturday, Muriwai Beach Patrol, contact John Simmons, phone 828-8642.
- June 10** Sunday Firth of Thames Wader Census, HT 14.30, 2.9m.
- June 16** Saturday, Kaipara Wader Census, HT 11.20, 3.9m.
- June 17** Sunday, Manukau Wader Census, HT 12.10, 3.8m.  
For more information contact Adrian Riegen phone 814-9741

**For more information or changes to this programme contact Suzi Phillips.**

**A Happy and Peaceful Festive Season from Auckland OSNZ !**



**TARA Newsletter of Auckland OSNZ**  
Private Bag 1, Helensville 0840