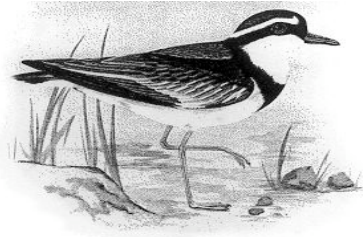


ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY N.Z.
WAIRARAPA BRANCH



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE. BARBARA
LOVATT. Ph. 063049948 <arriving@paradise.net.
nz>
REGIONAL RECORDER. COLIN SCADDEN. Ph.
06378 6423 <cescad@xtra.co.nz>

APRIL 07 UPDATE.

THURS. APRIL 12, 7.30 PM at
129 Renall St. Masterton.
PERSONAL BIRDING
EXPERIENCES.

This will be a requested repeat of a very
successful meeting in 2006, in which we
each shared a special birding
experience, either recent or historical.
Narena Olliver will also give a brief
description of the Cirl Bunting in
preparation for our.....

Field Trip Sat. April 14. Meet
Carterton Square 1.30 pm. for Upper
Plains Masterton Convenor: Narena
Olliver.

In Search of the elusive
CIRL BUNTING, & some
twitchathon-ing.

At our Branch AGM. all present office-
bearers were returned, with the addition

of Frank Minehan to our committee.
Welcome, Frank.

VISIT TO FENSHAM RESERVE.

A small group of us joined with Forest &
Bird on Feb. 24, to enjoy a very convivial
barbeque at the reserve. The setting was
really very attractive as it was positioned
on the edge of the bush, and of course
the food - as always when eaten al fresco
tasted really great.

The Speaker who was to have talked to
us was unable to be present, so after
lunch the rest of the afternoon was
declared informal. This gave us a chance
to have a very interesting walk through the
Reserve.

It is amazing the progress that has been
made on every aspect, especially the
tracks and plantings. A walk through
Fensham is magic, especially when the
highest point on the track is reached, and
the grand view of the local countryside is
revealed.

Thank you Forest & Bird and the
dedicated crew who have made this great
transformation.

This report compiled by Brian Boeson.

REPORT ON THE VISIT TO THE
WELLINGTON BRANCH, MARCH 5.

Barbara and Des Lovatt and Narena
Olliver drove over the hill to hear our
OSNZ President, Prof. Richard Holdaway
His topic was " NZ Palaeobiology and its
Relevance to Conservation and
Restoration of the NZ Biota. " The title
could have been off-putting, but this was
no high-brow stuffy scientific lecture.
Graphs and data were transformed into
ancient habitats, where our now extinct
fauna lived and died. Modern scientific
methods now enable scientists to build

up a whole scenario, not only from the skeletal remains but also from gizzard stones or traces in an avian digestive tract . The professor presented his lecture very much in laymen's terms, and interspersed with humour.

As our national OSNZ President, the professor stated that he hoped to visit the various Branches around NZ. In conversation afterwards he said he would very much like to visit our Wairarapa Branch later this year.

REPORT ON MARCH MEETING.

INTRODUCED PASSERINES.

There was a good turnout at our March meeting to hear Chris Day, who is English, and has come here to be the Education Officer at Mt Bruce, He gave a power presentation on the British birds we see mostly in our gardens which were introduced to NZ in the mid 19th century to help homesick immigrants adjust to life here in the colonies.

He showed us the status of these birds then and now in Britain. The most notable of them being the **Starlings** and **Sparrows** which both fell from being abundant then and in the red category now. **Skylarks** are so threatened that some might even have to be sent back again to boost their numbers. It is now thought that the British method of arable farming could be the main cause of the decline whereas there is more open grassland here. These birds did well here from the start because the land opened up for sheep suited them very well and they were no threat to the native birds who lived mainly in the bush. Thank you, Chris, for a very interesting talk. You certainly helped me with the finer points of identification and laid to rest the

old argument that the introduced birds were in competition with the native birds. I, for one, will appreciate them more than I used to.

Report compiled by Betty Watt.

MARCH FIELD TRIP

Report compiled by Colin Scadden.

The three of us who went on the field trip to Kiriwhakapapa were reminded of the early settler writing about Mount Bruce in 1888,....."being awakened by a chorus of Tui and Bellbird' and the fluttering of innumerable birds in the branches above, all presented a picture of natural beauty never to be forgotten".

We were greeted by a Bellbird as we arrived and Tui were not far behind. We heard these and Fantail, Grey Warbler, Parakeet and as well there were many other species present but too far away for us to identify with any certainty. Kereru were abundant all along the valley. Even though there had been quite a dry spell, of late, the bush was in good condition with many large trees, Beech, Matai and Redwoods towering over dense smaller shrubs and ferns.

WEBSITES.

<http://geesepeace.org>

This addresses the issue of humane control of Canada Geese on the N.American continent.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BIRDING-NZ/>

For day to day info. on sightings around the country.

e.g. recent sighting of a Royal Penguin on rocks near Ngawi. We posted our queries re.our Black Kite? sightings, on this site.

www.osnz.org.nz

This OSNZ site has a web-page devoted to Regional newsletters, so we can now access happenings all around the country. Brent Stephenson has set it up. Please use this innovative facility.

OSNZ 2007 subs.....

a gentle reminder that the due date was January,07. We would welcome any new financial members .

The sub.is \$57.50. If you wish to join please ask Barbara Lovatt for a Membership Application Form.

Membership entitles you to voting rights at Branch & National level, and copies of Notornis and Southern Bird.

Attendance at the OSNZ annual AGM weekend is always interesting. The programme includes a scientific day, and a day for a choice of. field trips. Dinners and informal times are an opportunity to meet others, to put faces to names, and to exchange ideas and experiences.

Of course, the highlight for our Wairarapa Branch is always the 5-6 day **Birding trip**, that Colin Scadden arranges around our attendance at the **AGM** weekend.

This year it is in New Plymouth, June 1-4 (Queen's Birthday weekend.)

Do consider joining up, joining us, and being there.

REPORT from NARENA OLLIVER, on her recent WALKING TOUR on STEWART ISLAND.

We flew into Invercargill late in the

afternoon on Thursday, 8th March, where we picked up a rental car and drove east towards the Catlins. Our bookings for the Stewart Island trip had got a bit mixed up so we had a day to fill in. Prospecting the Catlins for a possible future trip seemed a better idea than shopping in Invercargill.

We stayed the night right on the beach at Curio Bay and were rewarded by seeing Hector dolphins surfing the waves there while on an after dinner walk along the beach. Driving out the next morning saw spoonbills there as well, not to mention the petrified forest. We drove as far as Owaka, stopping off the Maclennan Falls where the bellbirds were just deafening. Also saw tomtit there. We went some way along the Catlins River walk where one is supposed to find yellowhead but had no luck. Anyway saw enough to wet the appetite and think I will go back there next year.

We met up with the rest of the group, just 6 in total, that evening in Invercargill and flew in a small plane over to Stewart Island the next morning where we landed at Mason's Bay on the beach and then walked along the beach to the DOC hut at Duck's Creek where we camped the night in tents.

Not much in the way of bird life along the beach except for NZ pipit and Oystercatchers, the pied variety. No NZ dotterel. The evening was spent kiwi spotting and we were well rewarded, they were calling all night but especially just before dawn.

The trek the next day was more rewarding for birds, tomtits, robins, brown creeper, and kiwi, in broad daylight along the track. The DOC caretaker of the area told us, and this was new to me, that the reason

why Kiwi on Stewart Island are out in the day time is that the male and female share the incubation of the egg which means that one of them has to feed in the daylight. Seems logical.

A water taxi picked us up at Freshwater and took us down river to Oban. I was absolutely done in. The hike, advertised as a walk, was really a bit much for me. But anyway I recovered sufficiently for the trip to Ulva Island the next day and there I missed out on rifleman and yellowhead again. Still it's a marvellous spot, Saddleback, Kakariki, Kaka, Robins, Stewart Island Shag.

We were to kayak the next day around the harbour but a southerly blew up and made it impossible, so spent the day exploring the tracks around Oban.

All in all, I think I would have enjoyed it all a lot more if I had just booked myself into accomodation at Oban and took small day trips around, pelagic birding one day, Ulva another. Kaka and pigeon are very numerous around Oban, feasting on coprosma berries, and even brown creeper. I intend to go back next year.

BLACK KITE SIGHTING

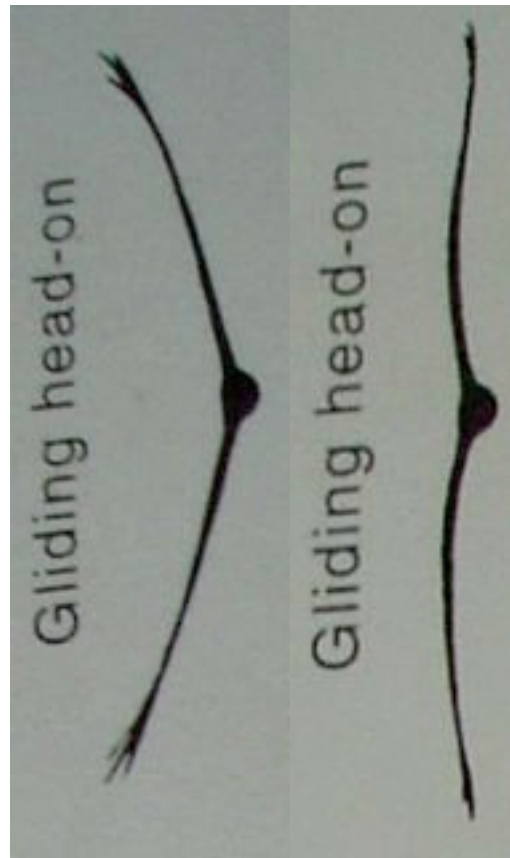
report from MIKE IMBER..(21.3.07)

I thought that you would be interested to know that I saw the Blenheim B.K. on 25 February. Together with a Wellington member we encountered at the site it gave us a grandstand view as it flew up the Waihopai Valley road. I have to say that it was distinctive and 'different' to the abundant harriers around, looking somewhat bigger and

darker [perhaps longer-winged].

One point that I saw, and which I had not found described in the refs available to me, was that the wings were held **horizontal** when gliding in contrast to the upward slant of the harriers when gliding. So look out for that.

We looked at hundreds of harriers throughout the eastern South Island, and 10-20 dead on roadsides, subsequently but nothing excited us enough to stop for a closer look sadly. So you may still have only the second BK in NZ in the southern Wairarapa.



Your Editor has downloaded the above gliding profiles. On the left, our NZ Harrier otherwise known as the Australasian or Swamp Harrier (Circus Approximans) and, on the right, the Black Kite (Milvus Migrans)