

Ornithological Society of New Zealand
Wairarapa Branch.



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE.
BARBARA LOVATT
4 CLARA ANNE GROVE,
GREYTOWN 5712
PH; 06 3049948
<barbara.lovatt@slingshot.co.nz>

SEC. / TREASURER
JENNY DORING
294 WAIOHINE RD
CARTERTON R.D.1 5791

REGIONAL RECORDER
COLIN SCADDEN
95 SOUTH RD
MASTERTON
PH: 06 3786423
<cescad@xtra.co.nz>

FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11. 7.30p.m. at 4 Clara Anne Grove, Greytown.
REGIONAL AGM**

followed by a sharing of individual SUMMER BIRDING EXPERIENCES.

Election of officers.

Jenny Doring is willing to continue as Sec/Treasurer

Colin Scadden is willing to continue as Regional Recorder.

Barbara Lovatt continues as Regional Representative until Dec.31, 2010.

Nominations for her successor must be sent to OSNZ Council by July 31, 2010.

Other committee members willing to continue are Geoff Doring, Narena Olliver, Brian Boeson, Peggy Duncan & Frank Minehan. You may wish to nominate further committee members, but they must be financial OSNZ members.

EDUCATIONAL BIRD NOTES.

Narena Olliver has offered to contribute these notes for the Newsletter every month. Narena has a wealth of knowledge that she will be able to share with us. Here is the first installment.....

Rhynchokinesis is the ability possessed by some birds to flex their upper mandible. Several shorebird species are able to flex their upper mandible upwards or downwards, starting from some point along the upper mandible. This process is known as "rhynchokinesis" and is rarely photographed. The following link of Bar-tailed Godwits, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Terek Sandpiper, and Swinhoe's Snipe illustrate some rarely observed shorebird behaviour.

<http://www.sunbittern.com/gallery-rhynchokinesis.html>

Rhynchokinesis is one of two types of **cranial kinesis**, the other being [prokinesis](#), in which the upper mandible moves at the point where it is [hinged](#) with the bird's [skull](#).

Rhynchokinesis on the other hand involves flexing at a point some way along the

mandible - either upwards, in which case the upper and [lower mandibles](#) diverge, resembling a [yawn](#), or downwards, in which case the tips of the mandibles remain together while a gap opens up between them at their midpoint. Unlike prokinesis, which is widespread in birds, rynchokinesis is only known in [cranes](#), [shorebirds](#), [swifts](#) and [hummingbirds](#).

A HUNCH THAT PAID OFF.

Colin Scadden reports on his observation and experiment.

After seeing the Rifleman nest box at Kowhai Bush during the AGM at Kaikoura, I decided to try one out at Mt. Bruce. Three cubes of 150mm with lids were made. The deciding factor was the entrance hole which was to be made 20mm diameter. The boxes were put up for the first season but without any success. For the second season the boxes were improved with better lids and three extra were added. These were put up late November and wonder of wonders I actually saw one being used three weeks later. None of the others appeared to have been used but one had some pieces of fern placed in it. At this stage I am unable to confirm that young were actually raised but very definitely that one box was used.

OUR SPECIAL PROJECT FOR 2010

Following discussion at the November, 09 meeting, it was decided that we would do weekly bird counts, in Greytown Memorial Park and Henley Lake. Ngarie Chamlet & Mike Lynch have devised the following methodology, and with a touch of wry humour no doubt directed at our aging membership.....

GREYTOWN BIRD COUNT--Greytown Memorial Park

The Greytown members of OSNZ are asked to perform a bird count in Memorial Park. You are asked to do your count at any time during the week starting.....
The Masterton members will perform a similar count at Henley Lake, using wet suits and snorkels. Walking the route will take 30 minutes.

Memorial Park Route : Park your car, mobility scooter or zimmer-frame at the roadside car park outside the children's playground.

Walk west down Kuratawhiti St. to the entrance to the swimming pool.

START YOUR BIRD COUNT HERE.

Walk down the avenue of Memorial Lime Trees.

Turn right into the double row of Plane trees, and proceed to a point halfway across the end of the cricket field.

Walk across the cricket field, and behind the cricket pavilion on to the sealed area. Then go straight across through the trees and into the camping ground at the back of the children's play area.

Walk down the sealed drive to the main drive and turn left.

Walk towards the main camping ground & around the driveway loop around the barbeque area.

Head back down the drive to the entrance on the left to the Bush walk.

Walk the "Walk" back to the Bush Walk entrance on Kuratawhiti St.

STOP COUNTING HERE.(Return to your Zimmerframe, mobility scooter or car)

Editor's note: The above instructions include a form for recording your findings. Ngarie has enlisted 8 “walkers” but more would be appreciated, including stand-ins in case of sickness or absence. Please contact Ngarie at 179 West St. Greytown. Ph: 06 3047222.

NEST RECORDS.

Have you remembered to record nestings of Blackbirds and Starlings in your area? Such records need to be on the official OSNZ Nest Record Card. Your R.R. gave them out at the November monthly meeting, to those who were interested. These records will enable OSNZ to compile national & accurate nesting records

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MARCH PROFILE : COLIN SCADDEN.

Volunteer Extraordinaire



He says it with a large smile and a chuckle. Around twenty years ago there was an Open Day at Mt. Bruce Bird Reserve. The Wairarapa Ornithological Society was asked to provide some volunteers. Colin Scadden put his hand up. His volunteering has never come to an end. On any Wednesday Colin can still be seen at Pukaha Mt.

Bruce. Sometimes he observes the habits of birds. Other times he talks with visitors telling them about the place and the birds.

However, Colin's interest in birds came long before this. For many years he has been banding young Caspian Terns at Onoke Spit which has been a Tern nesting place for at least eighty years. After observing the Terns behaviour and doing a bird count Colin decided to do some banding. He obtained a permit and the job began. The text books said the Terns came back to their same nesting place after a while, but so far Colin has not found one Tern that has come back to its particular site.

“They live a pretty precarious life down there because they nest in October. That's usually the time we have all the heavy north-westerly winds. And since they nest on the ground the sand gets blown over the nest and buries the eggs and chicks and they have to re-nest. They might do this two or three times in a season. By the third time they are just about ready to give up”.

“They are long living birds and probably live for around thirty years. So they possibly don't have to breed every season. Sometimes there are a dozen or so chicks, sometimes there are twenty, sometimes none”.

Last year Colin banded a record number of twenty-nine young Terns and reached his twentieth years of banding at Onoke Spit.

When the rare Taiko bird, the Magenta Petrel, was re-discovered in the Chatham Islands, after being thought to be extinct for a hundred years Colin made three visits to see it. Each time he failed to see the bird despite being there for several weeks each time.

From around a small total of eleven, the Taiko had now reached a population of over a hundred. They nest in burrows, rather like mutton-birds. Surviving in those circumstances is difficult as their predators include rats and pigs rooting about for food. A fence has now been put up to keep out the marauders.

Tenick Dennison, Betty Watt and Colin conceived and gave birth to the photographic brochure “Where to find birds of the Wairarapa”. Photographs were collected from a number of people, a friend was persuaded to draw the little maps showing you how to get there and two thousand copies of the brochure were printed with donations received from Trust Funds .

This brochure is still being used and should not need updating for several years. But, when it does require an update, Colin says thought will have be given about what is said about wading birds which live around the Lake Wairarapa shoreline. Sewage engineering and drainage has been responsible for some changes to the lake, but it not all negative. Royal Spoonbills that have not been seen for years are now re-appearing. Colin is looking forward to the day when larger numbers of other species return to the lake.