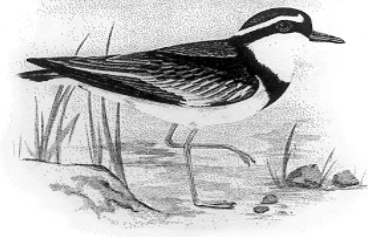


ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY N.Z. WAIRARAPA BRANCH



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JANUARY UPDATE 2007

-NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST.

Congratulations to Tenick Dennison, on receiving the MNZM(Member of the Order of NZ) for services to conservation.

A well-deserved honour, Tenick !

ECOLOGICAL NEWS

BAD NEWS.....There have been three sightings of ferrets on the Chatham Islands. Previously, the Chathams have been free of all mustelids.

MORE BAD NEWS....Australia has rid Macquarie Island of feral cats, but there has been a resultant proliferation of rats and rabbits, which are rapidly destroying the habitat on the island.

GOOD NEWS.....Over the holiday period, the Dominion Post ran a series of informative articles on the KERERU.

Great for heightening public awareness of this avian taonga, and the work of THE KERERU DISCOVERY PROJECT.

WELLINGTON CONSERVANCY RIVERMOUTH SURVEY 2006/07

Our Branch has signed a contract with DOC for us to undertake a survey of 12 rivermouths within the Wairarapa. The summer survey is already in progress, and the winter survey will take place from April 1 to June 30.

If you would like to know more about this venture, please contact Colin Scadden.



' THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS '.
A birding wag sent in this pic. We might have left Xmas behind now we're 07but enjoy the humour, anyway !

Narena Olliver has submitted the following book review.....

THE BIG YEAR

A TALE OF MAN,NATURE AND FOWL
OBSESSION. Mark Obmascik, 2004

A Big Year is an informal competition among North American birders to see or hear the largest number of species of

birds within a single calendar year and within a specific geographical area. A big year may be done within a single US state, or Canadian province, within the lower 48 continental U.S. states, or within the American Birding Association area {i.e. the 49 continental U.S. states (including Alaska), Canada and the French islands St. Pierre and Miquelon, plus surrounding waters and islands}.

Big Year is a contest with no referees and few rules. The contestants can see them however they want. They can fly to see them, ride a bike to see them or whatever. Given that, a great deal of money can be spent in the pursuit of the record number of birds seen in any year.

The book is the story of three men who were the top finishers in the 1998 Big Year competition covering the American Birding Association area. The record set was 721 birds, although there are only 675 indigenous species in the U.S. The extras came from rarities. It is considered that the 1998 year set a record which may not be broken for some time as it was an exceptional year with the strongest El Niño on record with birds being blown in by storms from Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Since this book came out, an Australian, Sean Dooley has written The Big Twitch which I gather is also a very readable book covering a Big Year in Australia. Also Brent Stephenson this last year has done his own Big Year for NZ birds.

This book can be borrowed from Narena.

(Footnote from your editor

"Although I tend to think "twitching" is a rather mathematical approach to Birding, I was soon hooked on reading

this very readable, humorous, and informative narrative. I recommend it. "

GHOST OF GONDWANA THE HISTORY OF LIFE IN N.Z. by George Gibbs. published 2006

(reviewed by Barbara Lovatt)

To quote the cover, " this is a remarkable story of how and why life evolved in N.Z. "

It is a time-travel saga spanning the last 80 million years. It is a well-researched endeavour to piece together the jigsaw puzzle of various theories and scientific evidence.

I managed to read it as part of my holiday- reading, so it cannot have been too highbrow ! You are welcome to borrow it from me.

BRANCH SNIPPETS.

We will be having our short BRANCH AGM at the beginning of the March meeting.

The summer PROGRAMME is out, so do come along to our very informal, friendly meetings and field-days.

Our new REGIONAL RECORDER is Barbara Lovatt who will also continue as 'Update' and 'Programme' Editor.

The 2007 OSNZ AGM is in New Plymouth, at Queen's Birthday Weekend. Colin Scadden is already planning yet another amazing birding tour for us, taking in the AGM.

Highly recommended !!!

And it is never too soon to sharpen your talons for THE BIG BIRD CONTEST later in the year !

To conclude.....

here is some more bird humour.....

THE SYDNEY OFFICE OF " BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA " IS LOCATED IN THE SUBURB OF CROWS NEST.