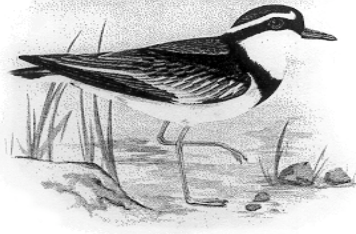


ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY N.Z.
WAIRARAPA REGION.



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NEWSLETTER JULY 07

JULY 5 MEETING. 7.30 p.m. at Narena Olliver's, 99 Main St
Greytown. " The Gallery " behind Koskelas Fine Wines & Ales.

Our own member, Dr. Neil Hayes will speak on **BROWN TEAL.**

N.B. This meeting is one week early, and NOT at the usual Greytown venue.

MILES KING REPORTS ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO AUSTRALIA INCLUDING OBSERVATIONS OF BLACK KITES.

The first part of our journey was to Sydney to see our youngest daughter. Many birds. Fast and colourful parrots, noisy ravens, crows, currawong, honeyeaters and wagtails. Possibly the most notable, secure rubbish bin lids to prevent the Australian white ibis from littering. A trip to the night dog races presented extra interest as the moths attracted by the lights were chased by swallows and/or martins.

From Sydney, our second hop (five and a half hours) to Perth and daughter number two. Huge number of bird species. Birds observed at parks and lakes very quiet. While photographing a pair of Shelducks the male warned me off by undoing my shoe laces. Feeding galahs, corellas and Australian ringneck parrots sitting on your shoulder or arm is a real treat. As is playing mini golf with black cockatoos chattering away above.

One evening on dusk, Janet and I observed 500+ corellas flying into roost near a lake we were visiting. Very spectacular and even more noisy.

A trip to a national park north of Perth, gave views of Wedgetail Eagles and Black Kite. I had excellent views of Black Kites in flight. They are quite distinct from the Harrier. Where the Harrier has a shallow vee shape in gliding flight with their body lower than their wing tips. The Black Kite is almost flat across the back, wing tip to wing tip. As their name indicates, they hover like a kite. Their tails swivelling to counteract any variation in the wind speed and direction.

The highlight of the species seen was undoubtedly the trio of splendid fairy wrens. Seen along a very popular coastal walking track, these two female or juveniles and the vividly bright blue male preened and foraged completely oblivious to us only meters away.

The third part of our trip was to see our third and eldest daughter in Brisbane. Here we had a wonderful boat trip on the river and estuaries on the Sunshine Coast. Birds galore. Australian, Glossy and Straw necked ibis. Two species of kingfisher and Kookaburra. Royal and Yellow billed spoonbills. Numerous White bellied sea eagles including nest bound chicks feeding and even pelicans wanting to share our lunch.

The two species that stand out for me here were the Whistling kite hovering (kite like) 50 metres above the water waiting for the unsuspecting tern or shag to surface with a fish, where-upon they were dived on by the kite and relieved of their catch. The kite alibility to hover stationery is truly wonderful to watch. The second species was heard before it was seen. This occurred in a marina at Surfers Paradise with boats, jet skies and a cacophony of other of human created noises. This beautiful bell like chime cut through as though there was no other sound to compete with. It took sometime to find the two Pied Butcher bird on a mast of a super yacht. My Australian field guide describes their sound as " a beautiful flute like song". It certainly was.

Editor's note Many thanks, Miles for sharing this experience with us, and for describing your Black Kite observations.

PROFILE OF A BIRDER.

At the recent OSNZ AGM & Scientific Day, your editor was impressed with a talk given by a Taranaki member entitled " Why I Am Here ." It was one man's birding journey. He was not a scientist, just an ordinary keen birder. He spoke from the heart, with

enthusiasm and humour. He epitomised the valuable contribution to Birding, that is found in OSNZ's ordinary membership. Amongst our own Wairarapa Branch membership we have similar stories to tell.

So here is a profile of one of our own bird enthusiasts, a former R.R. and our current Secretary / Treasurer.

BETTY WATT has been a member of OSNZ for around 20 years. Her initial interest in the Society was aroused by a visit to her G.P. whose waiting room was filled with pictures of birds. These images impacted on her curiosity, and very soon she found herself a member of OSNZ.

In 1988 Betty attended a birding course, initiated by Tenick Dennison, and run by Hugh Robertson and the late Barry Heather .

Keen to further her knowledge of birds, Betty attended a second course, the following year.

The Wairarapa Branch membership, although small was increased as a result of these courses.

In 1992, when Betty retired from her business, she began volunteer work at Mt. Bruce / Pukaha Wildlife Centre. Volunteers blazed their own trail , to become an integral part of the Wildlife Centre, where, today , their contribution is highly valued.

Betty has gathered leaf litter, mucked out aviaries, kept watch in summer heat, and cold winter rain, carefully observing and recording the details of birds and their habits. Her chosen specialty was the Stitchbird. Her knowledge of these birds is valued and respected by the professional staff. Careful observation, recording, and dedication of time provides an important dimension to the overall study of such birds, but it does not require a university degree, merely a love of birds.

In 1998 Betty was appointed to the Mt. Bruce / Pukaha Board, as the OSNZ representative, where she remained for 6 yrs, until 2004. During part of that time she also held office as secretary of the Board.

A recent accident has clipped Betty's wings, but that has not spelt the end of her work with her beloved birds.

Betty is a prime example of an OSNZ member who through her dedication and attainment of knowledge has made a real contribution in her chosen field, the Mt. Bruce / Puhaka Wildlife Centre. She continues to inspire others to follow in her footsteps.

A BLACK FANTAIL / PIWAKAWAKA was seen by Narena Olliver, down Hawk St. in Greytown on May 29.

The following was posted on 'Birding-NZ' by Graeme Taylor, and forwarded to our Branch by Ian Armitage., Wellington Branch.

" I was driving back from Mt Bruce (midway Mt Bruce and Masterton) late afternoon on Friday when I saw a bird flying toward me above the road (about 30m up). It was dark brown all over, had swept back wings and looked falcon like. It was quite a biggish looking bird (at least the size of a Harrier or even bigger). The size was the thing that really struck me. My

first impression was a falcon but it seemed simply too big to be a NZ falcon. Maybe it was just a Harrier flying with swept back wings but all the harriers I saw after that bird looked like classic harriers with broad wings and soaring flight over the road. Anyway I was driving at 100km, had about 6 cars tail-gating me and by the time I eased over, the bird had gone. Only saw it for about 3 seconds so wasn't enough to be a serious sighting but the bird did look very similar to brown falcons I have seen in Australia. Could be worthwhile checking out raptors at present.

N Z GARDEN BIRD SURVEY. JULY 14-22, 2007.

This has been initiated by Landcare Research and is a simple survey that we can all easily undertake, and is an ideal opportunity to involve not only our own membership, but also neighbours and friends, local schools, etc.

It consists of a mere one hour of your time, and at an hour of your choosing. Contact Barbara Lovatt for forms. Those on the Net can enter their findings directly onto the web. However, the web entry, in your editor's opinion, is a rather complicated procedure.

<http://www.nzbrn.org.nz>

The Royal Society of N. Z.

The LEONARD COCKAYNE MEMORIAL LECTURE was established to commemorate the life and work of Leonard Cockayne by the encouragement of botanical research in New Zealand. The lecture this year concerns the role of birds in shaping biodiversity.

[Birds in paradise - the role of birds in shaping New Zealand's Biodiversity.](#) Dr Bill Lee, from Landcare Research, Dunedin.

Wednesday 27 June 2007 at 7:30 pm, Science House, 11 Turnbull St, Thorndon, Wellington.

THE WINTER SECTION OF THE BIRD SURVEY, OF WAIRARAPA RIVER-MOUTHS.

A dedicated small group of our members have braved the elements to complete this survey. Many thanks to Colin Scadden and Miles King who were supported by Brian Boeson, Tenick and Janet Dennison, Narena Olliver, Geoff Doring and Barbara Lovatt.

Welcome to Colin Young, our newest financial member. Colin has already been a familiar face at our meetings and field days, where he has shared his enthusiasm for the world of Birds. Another valuable birder has joined our ranks.

REPORT on the JUNE MEETING.

IAN ARMITAGE TRIP TO AUCKLAND AND CAMPBELL ISLANDS

Time: January 2007

Boat: Tiama which has a concession to do two trips a year, leaving from Bluff.

Numbers: 7 plus skipper and included a DOC observer

Cost: Circa \$5000/per person for 10 days

As the weather was too rough to take in the Snares, the first stop was at Enderby Island, the northernmost island of the Auckland Islands. The rata was flowering so the tuis and bellbirds were conspicuous.

The Doc station on Enderby was found to be mainly "manned" by women, doing research on Hooker's, now New Zealand, sea lions. The wonderful images

portrayed sea lions lolling on the beach with numerous and characteristically opportunistic brown skuas.

The group hiked around the island, taking in the bird life, banded dotterels, and Auckland Island pipit which are more yellow than their mainland cousins. The pipits were described as "confiding", a lovely expression. Red crowned parakeets were common. Light mantled albatross, Antarctic terns and Auckland Island shags and Southern Giant petrels were

nesting. There were also a few black backed and red billed gulls. Red polls were numerous and there were a few blackbirds. Auckland Island tomtits were found near the beach and Auckland Island teal in the kelp lolling over the beach.

Zosterops lateralis were also about. Shy mollymawk or white capped albatross were also on their elevated nests. Such incredibly beautiful birds with their marvelous eyes and affectionate mating behaviour. The Auckland

Islands has the largest population of yellow eyed penguins and they were just everywhere. And finally but not least, huge rafts of sooty shearwater. Campbell Islands has no rata but it does have the Royal albatross and the odd wanderer and erect crested penguins. A sea elephant moulting was

almost tripped over. Pipits on Campbell are more yellow still. After the rats were removed from the islands, the pipits repopulated the islands from remnant populations on Dent and Jacquemart Islands. The feature of these islands was the large colony of Black-browed mollymawks nesting on the North East Cape, and of course the Campbell Island teal, also survivors from Dent island but supplemented by birds bred at our own Mount Bruce. Pigs have yet to be removed from the islands.

Auckland Island is enclosed by a marine reserve and Campbell Island is in waiting. The herb fields have recovered wonderfully since sheep were taken off the island.

We were also reminded of the ornithologists who were involved at the coast watch station during WWII., Falla, Fleming and Turbott and other interesting bits of history about these islands. All in all, I think it one of the best shows I have attended.

The Editor wishes to thank Narena Olliver for compiling the above report.

DATES for your DIARY.

Thurs. July 5.Meeting.
BROWN TEAL.

no Field trip this month.

THE BIG BIRD CUP

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10. BE THERE!
MAY THE BEST BIRD-BRAIN WIN.

You may note that our name UPDATE has reverted to the name NEWSLETTER, and our WAIRARAPA BRANCH has changed to WAIRARAPA REGION. Both these changes are in keeping with other REGIONS, with whom we share NEWSLETTERS. This has been an editorial decision.

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