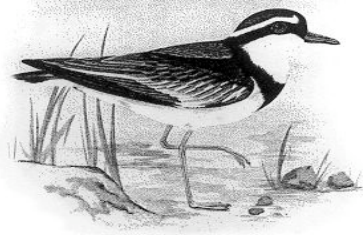


ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY N.Z.
WAIRARAPA BRANCH



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE. BARBARA
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REGIONAL RECORDER. COLIN SCADDEN. Ph.
06378 6423 <cescad@xtra.co.nz>

FEBRUARY - MARCH
UPDATE 2007

NOTICE OF BRANCH AGM(see
date and venue below)

Any financial members of OSNZ are
eligible for office. Current office-bearers
are.....

Regional Rep. Barbara Lovatt
Regional Recorder. Colin Scadden.
Sec. / Treasurer. Betty Watt.
Committee. Brian Boeson, Geoff Doring,
Tenick Dennison, Miles King. Narena
Olliver.

There are 23 current financial members.
2007 Subs. due Jan.1. (\$57.50.) Sub.
entitles you to voting rights at Branch and
National level, and issues of Notornis,
and Southern Bird.

MARCH MEETING & BRANCH
AGM 7.30 pm @ 4 Clara Anne Grove,
Greytown.

Speaker : CHRIS DAY, Education Officer
at Mt. Bruce / Pukaha, will speak on
INTRODUCED BIRDS.

Sunday MARCH 11 FIELD TRIP to
KIRIWHAKAPAPA for a
bush walk.

Meet at Moore Wilsons car park 9.30 am.
Convenor : Brain Boeson Ph: 06 3049074

REPORT ON FEB. MEETING,
The scheduled programme, SHARING
HOLIDAY BIRD SIGHTINGS was usurped
by the euphoria of the ? Black Kite
sightings.

N.B. The above topic has been re-
scheduled to our April Meeting.

As it was deemed appropriate to update
members, Jim Bicknell was invited to
show his videos.

Colin Scadden has compiled the
following report.....

Black Kite or Harrier--- That was the
question asked at our meeting. Jim
Bicknell had noted these birds in the area
for some time and showed us video
footage of several of these birds. Many
were flying and showing variation in the
shape of the tail . Another variation was in
the colour, with many birds being dark
coloured, while others were distinctly
Harrier coloured. Then there were spots
of white colour behind the head, juvenile
Harrier perhaps.

Viewing the films didn't actually resolve
whether the birds were Harriers or Kites
but it sharpened members' awareness
to any differences. We were left with the
possibility that there was at least one
Black Kite among the birds seen. By
coincidence, Colin Miskelly had seen a
Black Kite near Pahuatea on the Tuesday
before the meeting. . Three years ago
Trevor Worthy had seen one towards
Lake Ferry, so they seem to be about.

It was all very interesting and intriguing.

A feature of the month's bird sightings was the numbers of Kereru in groups from as widespread as the Rimutakas to Mikimiki. A Reef Heron had also been seen, as had a Bittern.

MONDAY MARCH 3.
INVITATION from WELLINGTON
BRANCH TO HEAR OUR OSNZ
PRESIDENT
PROF. RICHARD
HOLDAWAY speak on

NZ.Palaeobiology and its Relevance to Conservation and Restoration of NZ.Biota.

If you are able to attend, please contact our R.R. Barbara Lovatt. At least one car will be going down to this meeting.

WEBSITES.

www.ranz.org.nz
for on-line entries of sightings of Falcons ,
for the Raptor Association's survey of
Falcons.

Such information helps to build up a
picture of distribution and numbers.
Remember, we are the eyes and ears of
the birding world, in our own small way.

BIRDING SURVEY OF WAIRARAPA RIVER-MOUTHS.

Various members have been clocking up
hours and kms doing this extensive
survey, which is due to be completed by
the end of Feb. A further Winter survey will
be done April 1 to June 30. This a joint
OSNZ / DOC venture.

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT..... OR WHO WANTS TO CHEW THE FAT.....

Quote from a recent article in the Dom.
Post.

" Waikato Scientists, Dave Morgan, John
Innes and John Waas proved that killing
Magpies to improve the other birds'
nesting are a waste of time. Of the many
bird's nests the trio videoed they saw no
magpie predators.....only rats, cats,
harriers, and a pukeko.They said the
magpies' predatory notoriety was
unjustified, as they were not serious
predators. "

and a further quote from the same
article.....

"After 13 yrs of continual trapping of cats
and rats in the Orongorongo Valley, a
team of biologists led by Mike Fitzgerald
concluded that cats control the number of
rats in the bush. They warn that it is folly to
kill bush cats because it only prompts the
rat population to explode."

LOST & FOUND.

Following the pot-luck dinner, at the
Kings' last December, a distinctive pair of
salad servers were found. Made of
coconut wood. Souvenir from Fiji ?
Contact Barbara Lovatt to claim them. If
not claimed by April, they will go to the
Salvation Army op.shop.

SPECIAL THANKS to Ngaire Chamlet
who was in charge of supper provisions
for meetings.(tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits).
This task was not reviewed, when the
meeting venues were moved from hired
halls to private homes. Many thanks,
Ngaire, for your services.

STOP PRESS.

This report has just been received from Mike Imber re. Black Kites.....

Here are my impressions and thoughts on this matter.

On 8 February 2007 I went with Jim Bicknell, Brian Boeson and Barbara Lovatt to the former's land on the west bank of the Ruamahanga River between about 11am and noon. We saw about 10 birds of prey which were in two apparent families of 2 or 3 fledglings and attendant adults. The latter were all seen flying but the juveniles were on the ground most of the time and had probably left the nest sites quite recently [eg within 2 weeks]. All were clearly Australasian Harriers, although one bird seen early on flying at a distance was very dark [but seen only in silhouette] and had me guessing for a while till it interacted with an adult Harrier, apparently amicably. That bird remains unidentified.

The features of juvenile Harriers observed were a pale to white mark on the nape [not present in any age of Black Kites] and the very dark brown, almost slaty plumage. The yellow legs were long, as they are in Harriers, being almost 3 times longer than those of Kites in terms of the proportions of the bare tarsi to feathered thighs. This means that the posture of Kites on the ground is more leaning forward.

I have seen Black Kites often in Australia although their appearance is not yet firmly imprinted on my mind.

The features to look out for in Black Kites vis-à-vis Harriers are:

Never a pale nape

The short legs [both have yellowish legs] as discussed above

The concave tail which is often widely fanned in flight [ie to about 45 degrees] whereas Harriers rarely fan to more than about 30 degrees. Even when fanned the outer tail feathers remain visibly longer. Harriers often show a pale patch at the rump when quite young, which of course becomes white in some adults: this is absent in Kites.

There is a difference in wing shape in flight with Kites having more parallel sided wings and the primaries more 'fingered' ie primary tips separated. If you have computer and internet, go into Google and you'll find some good shots in the first 20 items.

I'm not sure about wing aspect in Kites: Harriers glide with a shallow-V aspect; it may be flatter in Kites but texts available to me do not address this.

There is a difference in calls, that of Kites being more complex but this may rarely be heard in NZ.

Confusion with Harriers is most likely

about now [December – March] when Harriers are fledging; later in the year these juveniles probably become paler with feather wear.

The underwing patterns of the two seem fairly similar with pale/white at the primaries' bases.

Hope this helps. Thank to Jim and Brian and Barbara for showing me around. Thanks also to Narena for putting the item in Birding-NZ: written just as I would have done.

There obviously is at least one Black Kite sometimes present or resident in Wairarapa, as seen by Trevor Worthy and possibly Colin Miskelly in the Lake Wairarapa/ Onoke areas, so keep a good look out as it quite likely wanders further north.

PLANNING THE YEAR AHEAD.

Your committee would welcome any suggestions for monthly speakers and field trips. We want to maintain our high standards, and you can help us to do so. The monthly meeting in homes has been a winner, with a good mix of serious Birding subjects, combined with our warm friendly atmosphere.

We, the Wairarapa Branch, are uniquely " us. "

COPY FOR UPDATES.

As the monthly UPDATE is your forum, please submit any items that you think may be of interest. The monthly deadline is around mid-month.

DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR. (see details on page 1 and 2)

Saturday, Feb. 24.

Fensham Reserve, with Forest and Bird. (details in January Update.)

Monday, March 3. to Wellington Branch meeting.

Thursday, March 8 .

Short AGM & Monthly meeting-- Greytown.

Sunday, March 11.

Field trip to Kiriwhakapapa.

Thursday, April 12.

Branch meeting. --Masterton.

Saturday, April 14.

Field Trip to Upper Plain.