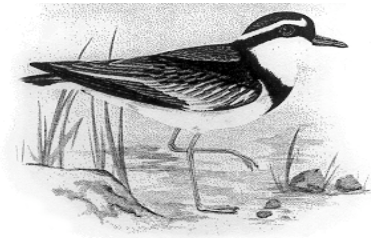


Ornithological Society of New
Zealand
Wairarapa Region.



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MARCH- APRIL NEWSLETTER
2008

PLEASE TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF
THE DATES AND VENUES ON
THIS PROGRAMME, AS THEY DO
NOT CONFORM TO OUR USUAL
MONTHLY FIXTURES.

SUNDAY JANUARY 27. FIELD
TRIP TO DONALDS' BLOCK,
(courtesy of the owner, Jane Gillet)
on the north-east side of
LAKE WAIRARAPA .

Report compiled by Jenny Doring.

Brian Boeson, Geoff & Jenny Doring, Narena Olliver, Frank Minehan, Colin & Shirley Scadden, Jack Luttrell & our host Jane Gillet, along with Maria Fairbrother all went to Donalds Block. The weather was overcast but perfect for bird watching. After assembling at Jane's letterboxes we set off in convoy led by Jane.

We stopped at Haywood Lagoon (an area Jane

has a coverment on) and she told us that Ducks Unlimited help keep the willows under control by aerial spraying every second year. There is a **shag colony** situated there. Because of the long hot dry summer, the Lagoon has dried up and is now higher than the water table that supplies the water. Drastic measures will have to be taken to enable the water to return. Birds sighted here were **pukeko and chicks, magpie, welcome swallow, spurwing plover, starling, tui, yellowhammer, eastern rosella, whitefaced heron harrier and pipits.**

We then continued towards the Lake in convoy and when we were about 500 yards from the Lake, parked our cars and then climbed aboard Jane's four wheel drive to finish our trip to the fenceline just before the Lake. We climbed over a stile and made our way to the Lake- we paddled over a short stretch of water and then we were on the Lake bed. Gradually, we made our way south and saw a number of birds which included

Black swan, pied stilts, skylarks. black shag, paradise shelducks, mallard and a group of 50 blackbilled gulls. The weather started to look a bit menacing so we returned to Jane's fourwheel drive and did the reverse trip back to where our cars were parked. We thanked Jane for everything and we were told that we could come back and look at the Lake and birds whenever we liked.

We decided, as it was lunchtime that we would go to Lake Reserve to see if we could locate the **Royal Spoonbills** spotted by Colin earlier in the month.

As we were nearing Jane's letterboxes, we spotted a **BLACK KITE- a big black bird very much like a Harrier.** We continued to Lake Reserve and on to the wetlands where we made our way toward a large pond, and there to our delight were **about 40 Royal Spoonbills.**

Jenny moved in closer to take some photos and as the alarm calls were being made by various

other birds, the Spoonbills all rose in magnificent flight and went to the Lake. We then walked around to another large part of the lake wetlands and spotted 4 dabchicks and later notice at least 2 dabchick chicks. There were also whitefaced heron, black swan with cygnets, black shag, pied stilt spurwing plover and welcome swallows. We then moved back to the Reserve, where we pulled up a log (some of us had brought chairs!) and watched a lonely Oystercatcher. It flew away with a mussel in its beak and was back a short time later fossicking in the Lake for more food. As we were driving out of the Reserve a Shoveler was spotted. All in all a great day and enjoyed by everyone who attended.

REPORT on the MONTHLY MEETING & REGIONAL AGM THURSDAY FEBRUARY 14 7. 30 pm 4Clara Anne Grove, Greytown
Compiled by Barbara Lovatt.

At the Regional AGM all standing office-bearers and committee were re-elected and Peter Griffith was elected as a welcome new committee member.

Glen Holland then presented a data show entitled.....
HYENAS TO BEE-EATERS---A RECENT TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA.
Glen and his family came out from South Africa 10 yrs ago. Glen became well-known to many of us during his 3 yrs at Mt. Bruce / Pukaha Wildlife Centre. This time was followed by 7 yrs at Auckland Zoo. Glen has now returned to the Wairarapa from where he is involved in Zoo Conservation. Glen leads Birding tours to African countries, and is developing a South Pacific Birding Trail

modelled on Trails already known to N.Zers such as Wine, Food, Art trails etc.
HYENAS to BEE-EATERS was a stunning data-show of colourful and amazing birds, their habitat and their bird calls. Glen had always been remembered by our members, for his ability to mimic bird calls and, once more, he did not disappoint us with this unique skill. Thank you Glen, and we look forward to your next presentation.

N.B THERE WAS NO FIELD TRIP IN FEBRUARY., as it was pre-empted by the January 27 alternative trip to the Donald Block.

SATURDAY MARCH 8 meet at Moore Wilson's carpark, Masterton 7.45 am for car-sharing and departure at 8 am for Foxton and the Manawatu Estuary for a **FAREWELL TO THE BIRDS**. This will be a combined event with the Manawatu Estuary Trust and Forest and Bird and an opportunity to experience this internationally important Ramsar site.

Convenor:Colin Scadden.ph:063786423

THURSDAY MARCH 13.
7.30 p.m 129 Renall St. Masterton.
SHARING OF OUR RECENT OR HISTORICAL INDIVIDUAL BIRDING EXPERIENCES. On previous occasions, this has always been a good meeting, learning from one another.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 7.30 p.m at 129 Renall St. Masterton. Tenick Dennison will present HIGHLIGHT OF WAIRARAPA OSNZ SINCE 1988.

This will be important archival material, presented by one of our most knowledgeable members. A MUST, SO BE THERE !

SATURDAY APRIL 12 meet at Moore Wilsons Car Park at 10 a.m. for a field trip to the WOODVILLE area. Visit Val and Des Cleghorn's property, and environs. Bring lunch, and suitable footwear for walking. This will be an opportunity for us to meet with Val and Des who live on the geographical periphery of our Region. Convenor : Narena Olliver Ph:06 304 8080

BIRDING OBSERVATIONS of a VOLUNTEER, while on the PYRAMID VALLEY FORENSIC "DIG", NORTH CANTERBURY, Jan.-Feb. 08.

Compiled by Barbara Lovatt.

The iconic Pyramid Valley Swamp being Covenanted, and fenced from stock, was a comparatively lush oasis on this otherwise parched and arid farm. Poplars and pines, on the borders of the swamp were home to **Fantails, Grey Warblers and the Little Owl.**

The Little Owl, absent in the North Island, was introduced to the South Island from Germany in 1910 to combat small introduced birds which were considered a farming nuisance. Late afternoon and during the night, at Pyramid Swamp, the Little Owl was heard, its cry not unlike the sound of a squeaker in a child's toy. On an extremely windy day, the Little Owl was heard objecting profusely from a poplar tree just above the camp-site. The swamp, although dry, was lush with long green grasses and a mecca for **circa 400 adult and juvenile Redpolls,**

as well as the odd Silvereye, Yellowhammer and un-identified L.B.Js.

David Melville arrived from Nelson to mist-net and band 80 Redpolls. David offered some expert tuition and practical experience in this, to those "dig" volunteers who wished to participate.

Spur-winged Plovers, Harriers and Magpies were ever-present above the surrounding hills.

A full report on the Pyramid Valley Forensic "dig" will be published in SOUTHERN BIRD by Prof. Richard Holdaway, our national OSNZ PRESIDENT, and leader of the "dig."

Your R.R. / Editor will be overseas during March and April, hence this combined March/ April Newsletter.

REMINDERS.

- A Payment of 2008 subs.
 - B Farewell to the Birds. Sat. March 8
 - C Check March and April Meeting and Field trip dates and venues, because they do not conform to our usual monthly fixtures.
 - D Registration for OSNZ AGM & conference Kaikoura, Queen's Birthday weekend.
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PREVIEW OF MAY MEETING.
THURSDAY, MAY 8. 7.30 p.m. at 4 Clara Anne Grove, Greytown.
Christine Reed will present a talk on **THE BLACK STILT.**
Details to be announced later.