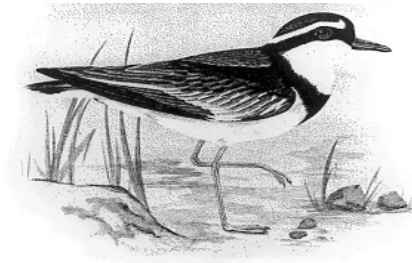


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## SEPTEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER.



Colin Scadden, Emile Schmiegl, Barry Allom, Glenys Hansen, Miles King & Tenick Dennison receiving the BIG BIRD CUP from Brian Boeson, on behalf of the defeated Greytowners.

## BIG BIRD CUP. AUGUST 2008

So, the North pipped the South at the post  
By a meagre 3 points, so don't boast.  
Though graciously defeated  
Revenge will be meted

When, next time, we'll "have you on toast."

penned by Eileen van Trigt.

Thank you to Quizmaster, Chris Day, Education Officer from Mt. Bruce / Pukaha Wildlife Centre who again presented a comprehensive and challenging quiz, and fielded some chirpy asides and blatant barracking between the rival teams. The cup, all polished and resplendent, was presented with much good humour to the winning Masterton team. Barbara Lovatt apologises for her out-of-focus pic .( above )

## MONTHLY MEETING, THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11.

**GLEN HOLLAND** WILL GIVE A PRESENTATION ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO **NAMIBIA**. ( FORMERLY GERMAN WEST AFRICA )

Glen will host the evening and has very kindly invited us all to a light South African-style meal, at 6.30 p.m. at his home, 38 Colville St. Masterton. Directions: from Upper Plain Rd., turn R. into Edith St. then dog-leg to the L into Oak St. Then 2nd on L there is a sharp turn into Colville St. This is a most generous offer of hospitality and will be another highlight in our calendar. Your editor suggests that prior to Sept. 11, she indicates to Glen possible numbers of those who will be attending. To this end, please email or phone Barbara Lovatt (contact details Newsletter front page) before Tuesday, Sept.9.

**N.B. venue & commencement 6.30 p.m.**

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## FIELD TRIP SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13.

Meet at Farmlands, Greytown at 11 a.m. for a visit to Denise and Dougal Mackenzie's Western Lake Rd. property, where they have done extensive tree planting on their hillside garden, with resultant birdlife. Denise has very generously offered to serve a cuppa when we arrive at 3.p.m. Prior to that, we will visit the adjacent spit / wetlands where there should be some interesting birding.

**BRING:** Gumboots / boots, wet-weather clothing, binoculars, thermos and lunch, and a donation towards driver's petrol.

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## REPORT on the FIELD TRIP SUNDAY, AUGUST 17.

Six members visited a farm property on Phillip's Line, followed by a welcome cuppa at Jack Luttrell's. Pukeko were not present in great numbers, but also present were Spur-winged Plover, Paradise Shelduck, Mallards, and a Harrier and Magpies. A visit to the Luttrells, as always afforded a close-up view of Silvereyes, Greenfinches, Sparrows, Chaffinches, Dunnock, and their resident Tuis. On the return, via Ward's Line 25+ Pied Stilts were dispersed on a soggy ponded paddock, by the roadside.

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## RESIGNATIONS.

Due to other commitments, Miles King and Peter Griffiths have resigned from our committee. We thank them for their service and wish them well.

## NEW FINANCIAL MEMBERS

We welcome Emile Schmieg, Glen Holland, Glenys Hansen and Jenny Whyte who all bring considerable knowledge and expertise to our membership.

## REGIONAL NEWSLETTERS.

Some R.R.s exchange monthly Newsletters by email. Your R.R. has been impressed with those from Otago, Wellington and The Far North, all of which contain 10-12 pages of very interesting material, and produced to a very high standard. If you would like to go on an emailing list for your R.R. to email them on to you, please contact her. However, it would not be practical to print out copies and to post them snail-mail to you.

### HOT TIP

For those of you who have Printers, Dick Smiths now offer 10% discount on new ink cartridges if you bring in your old cartridge.

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Your editor, from time to time, profiles an OSNZ Wairarapa member for the Newsletter. It is always interesting to know the life pathways that have made us into birders, and to record these personal journeys. Recently, Barbara Lovatt interviewed Helen Cook, and compiled this report.

## PROFILE OF HELEN COOK

According to the Region's early records, the OSNZ Wairarapa was already formed, in 1987, with a membership of 10.

In those early days, members were fairly geographically separated from one another, so had few formal meetings. However, they maintained contact with one another, and their links to the national OSNZ body. Some regularly travelled to Wellington to attend the Wellington Region's monthly meetings. The OSNZ Wairarapa Region owes a debt of gratitude to the vision and dedication of those early members.

Helen Cook joined OSNZ in 1988 but her interest in Birds began during her childhood years on a back-country farm, where she learned to hunt, with her brothers (for food not sport, Helen stressed). From stalking prey, Helen developed the art of stalking birds to observe their behaviour. From a male oriented childhood, Helen moved into a female environment during her years at boarding school and during nursing training. For many years, Helen was a Plunket Nurse in the Wairarapa. Long hours and long journeys to remote rural homes gave Helen further opportunity to develop her birding observations, and of the natural world in general.

In 1969, Helen visited her brother, in Vancouver and travelled with him up to Alaska and down to California. This was to do with his work as an

international authority on Rhododendrons.

When Helen retired, in 1979, she decided to focus on these interests. She took out Life membership of the Royal Forest & Bird Society , the Botanical Society, and the OSNZ.

Helen was one of the early volunteers at Mt. Bruce / Pukaha Wildlife Centre. Her specialties were the Cambell Island Teal and the Chatham Island Shore Plovers. Helen also shared regular 5-minute bird-counts with Toni Pyle at Mt. Bruce and Mt. Holdsworth.

In 1980 Helen went as a volunteer, to the Chatham Islands. The group were assisting in the study of the Taiko. Camp conditions were basic, and the work was arduous, but fulfilling. Ever the keen observer, Helen recalled the beauty of the wildflowers, the irridescent feathering of the Chatham Island shags, and Shearwaters fishing below the cliffs. Helen returned to the Chathams a few years later, and was the person who discovered the skeleton of a Taiko during one of the tramps.

Nowadays, Helen lives in Greytown, in a house that she actually built herself, nearly 40 years ago. 30 years of Woodwork night-classes at Kuranui College had not been merely a pastime. Her eclectic garden reflects her own individuality, and the trees she planted are visited by Kereru, Falcon, Silvereyes, Tui, Finches, Starlings, Blackbirds and Thrush. In the 1990-s, Helen observed a pair of Kakas mating in a treetop, in the garden, at a time when Kaka were officially not thought to be in Greytown. They were unusually present , in the presence of a most unusual and unique personality, our OSNZ local treasure / taonga, Helen Cook.

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## KAKA happenings.

The picture of the Kaka in our August Newsletter has received favourable comment from various members, so thank you, again, to Colin Hicks who submitted the pic.

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## Regional Recorder's notes for August.

Morepork were heard in Greytown as were Bellbird which were seen in Masterton as well. Eight Kingfishers were seen between Carterton and Waiohine. Our new member Glenys Hansen has Dabchick and Black Swan on her lake. A Caspian Tern was seen at Henley Lake where a Redpoll was spotted. The star report of the evening was of the Falcon that visited a tree in Brian Boeson's garden, leaving telltale signs of the feathered remains of a domestic dove.