

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

WANGANUI BRANCH



Birding Wanganui

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Newsletter – January 2011

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One of the four kaka present at Virginia Lake from mid August to early November.

Photograph by Ormond Torr

Kaka chronicles

Over the past few years we have had sporadic sightings of kaka in and around Wanganui and some other places on the coastal plain. We don't know from where these birds come, but the time of year suggests that they may be young birds dispersing from their natal territories. This year, however, up to four birds were present together at one time at Virginia

Lake, with the birds being seen on and off from mid August through to early November. Was this just a coincidental aggregation, or was it a family group, either parent birds and their offspring, or a group of siblings dispersing together? We do not know, but because the number of birds present varied over time, a coincidental aggregation seems most likely.

Does the increase in reported sightings of kaka suggest an increase in the number of birds in the region, or is this just an artefact of more people becoming aware of the importance of reporting such sightings? This year, for example, in addition to the birds seen in Wanganui, we received reports from Turakina (April, Dawne Morton), Fordell (June, Peter Serkin), and Mt Lees (October, third-hand via Phil Thomsen). Where do these birds come from? And, again, are they young birds or adults (or both)? Are these winter movements part of a regular pattern of dispersal or seasonal relocation, or are the birds being forced to move because the areas that they are in cannot sustain them during winter, for one or other reason (e.g. habitat degradation)?



Kaka feeding on a macrocarpa at Virginia Lake, September 2010

Photograph: Ormond Torr

Where are the closest populations of wild birds to Wanganui? We know that they occur in the forests on the western side of Mt Ruapehu and on Mt Taranaki, as well as in Wanganui National Park, but are there any nearer than that? If you travel to places such as Atene Skyline, or up the Kauarapaoa Valley, keep eyes and ears open for any sights or sounds of kaka, and let us know. If the current campaigns to control the populations of possums and other alien predators are successful, we ought to see some evidence of this in an increase in species such as kaka.

Finally, if the birds seen in winter are dispersing young birds, what do they do at this time? Do they begin to form pair

bonds? Close observation of such birds in places such as Virginia Lake, could help us to understand better their interactions and social relationships. Let us know what you see.

Australian Magpie nest

Lynne Douglas circulated an email to some of us with photographs of the nest of a pair of Australian magpies that she has been observing at Castlecliff Beach. The nest was blown down during one of the recent bouts of high wind. She wrote: "...note the amazing construction. The basic structure is woven from long flexible sticks and *Muelenbeckia* strands, along with strips of black plastic shade cloth, white plastic, etc.. The lining is interesting as it consists of white and brown sheep's wool, horse hair, moulded newspaper, spider webs, dog hair, sand, plastic film, grass, plant fibre (cabbage tree leaf) and other items; even items from the [Wanganui] Chronicle puzzle page. Surprisingly, it does not contain any wire, which I have seen in most magpie nests."



*Cup (top) and base (bottom) of an Australian Magpie's nest. The wire-like strands are the stems of *Muelenbeckia*.*

Photograph: Lynne Douglas

Nests serve a number of purposes: a base to support the eggs and incubating bird; insulation against heat loss from the eggs and chicks (and in extremely hot environments, insulation against the eggs being overheated from outside); and concealment for the incubating bird. We tend to take them for granted but think about the following questions: How much time and energy do the parent birds spend building a nest? How variable is this effort among different species, individual pairs within a species, the age and experience of the birds, and season in which the nest is built?

How much material do the birds use? How specific is that material a) to a given species, and b) to a particular pair? What is the trade-off between using durable nest material, such as tough fibres (or even wire), and the effort needed to incorporate that material into the nest? Who builds the nest: the female, the male, or both? For species that live in groups, do all members help to build the nest, or is nest-building confined to a subset of individuals? If so, which ones? In short, what does each individual contribute, and how variable is this among different pairs or groups?

Progress in conserving the whio

In October, Jim Campbell, the Department of Conservation's Whanganui Area Programme Manager for Biodiversity (Assets), gave an update at our monthly meeting on the present status of whio (blue duck) in the Manganui o te Ao-Retaruke National Security site in the central North Island. Much of the focus is on controlling predators, principally stoats, and monitoring population numbers and breeding success along 66 km of river (26 km of the Manganui o te Ao; 20 km of the lower Retaruke and adjacent streams; and 20 km of the upper Retaruke). This security site is what is one of eight set up nationally to conserve a minimum of 50 pairs at each site. The latest population estimate is of 65 pairs across both catchments, well above the target.

The number of pairs recorded on the Manganui o te Ao has increased from 25 in 2007/08 to 37 in 2009/10 (1 pair per 0.7 km of river). The low number in 2007/08, however, may have been due to two of the monitored areas being surveyed only twice rather than the 4-5 times achieved in subsequent years. More-or-less complete monitoring of the Retaruke was only achieved in 2009/10, yielding a count of 28 pairs (1 pair per 1.4 km of river). Adult survival on the Manganui o te Ao between August 2009 and March 2010 (i.e. over the breeding season) was high: all 37 males survived, as did all but one female. No comparable data are available from the Retaruke.

Breeding success on the Manganui o te Ao was similar to the previous year: 0.86 fledglings/pair against 0.91 fledglings/pair in 2008/09. Only 28 of the 37 pairs attempted to nest, however, producing 16 broods (nesting success 57%) with a total of 38 ducklings, of which 32 fledged (duckling survival: 84%).

Breeding success was marginally higher on the Retaruke and adjacent streams, 1.1 fledglings/pair, but it is not clear if all the resident pairs attempted to breed. Sixteen broods were produced containing a total of 41 ducklings, of which 32 survived to fledging (duckling survival: 78%). Most ducklings were apparently lost during both catchment-wide and local floods.



Adult whio with two ducklings. Photograph: DoC

The high adult survival and reasonably high nesting success has been largely due to the predator control programmes carried out along these rivers in recent years. These control programmes are integrated *Kia Wharite*, a joint biodiversity conservation project between DoC and the Horizons Regional Council set up in 2008, involving predator control and habitat protection on about 90,000 ha of private land and the same amount of public land. In 2009/10, 246 stoat, 45 weasel, 4 ferret, 66 cats, 1882 rats and 885 hedgehog were trapped in the security site.



Stoat caught in a DOC200 trap, baited with an egg.

Photograph: DoC

In addition, local landowners are becoming more involved in predator control, either directly or by allowing DoC staff access and permission to operated on their properties. One local land owner with a particular commitment to whio conservation, Dan Steele (Blue Duck Lodge, Retaruke Station), with the help of volunteers, has been actively trapping predators (and monitoring whio) along the rivers in his property with the assistance of DoC staff and equipment. In 2009/10, he accounted for 100 mustelids (stoats etc.), 22 cats, 1549 rats, and 253 hedgehogs, as substantial achievement. As has been found elsewhere, controlling predators has to target the full spectrum, because removing the top predators, such as mustelids and cats, merely releases the pressure on groups such as rats, which are both predators (of whio and other nesting birds) and prey (of stoats, weasels, etc.).

Human activities can also adversely affect whio. These include water diversion for hydropower generation; intensification of agricultural land use; deforestation, erosion and river siltation; disturbance to the riverbed, for example through gravel extraction; and recreational activities such as trout fishing, white-water rafting and kayaking. All these activities have the potential to disturb the birds, particularly during the breeding season. Some river sections that support whio, or did so in the recent past, are unprotected. Protecting whio and their habitat therefore requires combining increased public understanding, working with those who use the rivers in various ways to help them minimise the impacts of their activities, and legal protection.

Most importantly, DoC has to get the trust, understanding and support of landowners and the local *iwi*. Considerable time has been spend developing these relationships, from school children upwards. Almost all the contractors engaged by DoC to control predators and monitor whio populations come from Raetihi and other small rural settlements in the region, which contributes in some measure to the economy of the region. Cooperation and collaboration of this sort is essential for the long-term survival of low-density, habitat specialists such as whio.

The work by DoC is supported by a grant from the Central North Island Blue Duck Trust. A copy of the report *Securing Whio (Blue Duck) in the Manganui o te Ao and Retaruke Rivers National Security Site* can be downloaded from the DoC website: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/conservation/native-animals/birds/securing-whio-blue-duck-in-the-manganui-o-te-ao-and-retaruke-rivers/>. Any sightings of colour-banded whio should be reported to DoC through its online reporting form at: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/native-animals/birds/bird-banding/reporting-a-bird-band/non-gamebird-band-report-form/>.

Photographers

Birding Wanganui is endowed with a number of talented photographers. We have all become accustomed to seeing the many striking pictures circulated regularly by Paul Gibson and Ormond Torr. What is less well known is that there are other photographers within this group, some living elsewhere in the region, who are patiently going about building portfolios of their work.

The following is a small selection of images taken by three of these photographers. If you have any photographs of birds that you'd like to share with others, send them in and I'll incorporate them in a future newsletter.

Lynne Douglas (Wanganui)



Lynne photographed this female Paradise Shelduck at Virginia Lake, with the reflection of the autumn colours of the leaves giving a sense of the bird swimming in molten metal.



For some years, Lynne has been watching and photographic particular groups of Australian Magpies in Castlecliff and Springvale. Here the female is about to feed a fledgling a bug caught on the sports field at Springvale Park.



A presumed male Skylark adopts an aggressive posture during a fight with another skylark.

Betty Shepherd (Rotorua)



A White-fronted Tern at the entrance to Ohiwa Harbour bringing in a fish fingerling to its mate, 30 November 2008.

About this photograph, Betty wrote: "The males were gathering fish and screaming down wind and then approaching the colony heading into wind. I panned, following the bird from the down wind leg and when the male got to the female he wanted to attract he did this amazing split turn and landed near her with the offering. That's her with the beak in the air. The whole scene was fascinating, she would be wanting the fish first and then decide if she would make plans with him. He had been down that track before and lost many fish, so was indicating 'commit and I will give you the fish.' There was a real pantomime

acting out in front of us and as you could imagine, there were dozens and dozens of these rituals going on at the same time and the noise was quite deafening.”



Juvenile kingfisher with a crab that it has just caught on the Pukehina coast. After this bird caught the crab it took it back to the fence and smacked it from side to side, breaking off the legs (but leaving the pincers), before rapidly flipping the crab up and swallowing it. Kingfishers regularly visit the Wanganui and other estuaries during winter, when they feed largely on crabs and other arthropods found on the sand and mudbanks.

Paul Vandenberg (Levin)



White Heron photographed by Paul Vandenberg at the Manawatu R estuary, 19 September 2009. Notice the yellow bill of this bird, indicating that it is in non-breeding condition.



NZ Dabchick photographed at Pohangina wetlands, 1 November 2009.

Recent sightings

Observers: Alan Doig (AD), Lynne Douglas (LD), Bill Fleury (BF), Peter Frost (PF), Paul Gibson (PG), Colin and Robyn Ogle (CO, CRO), Alison Pickett (AP), Judith Robinson (JR), Sav Saville (SS), Bevan Shaw (BS), Laurel Stowell (LS), Ian Sutherland (IS), Phil Thomsen (PT), Ormond Torr (OT). All dates are given as dd/mm/yy.

New Zealand Dabchick – 2, Virginia Lake, 19/09/10, possible courting (OT: see photograph).



Northern Giant Petrel – 1 offshore Whanganui R mouth, mid morning, 06/10/10 (PF)

Little Penguin – 1 found dead on South Beach, midway between Whanganui and Whangaehu river mouths (OT, PG, PF)

Black Shag – 6, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF);

Pied Shag – 1, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PG, PF)

Little Black Shag – 1, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF);

Little Shag – 1, Koitiata lagoon, Turakina R mouth, 04/09/10 (PF); beginning new nesting season at a new site on Virginia Lake, 06/09/10 (OT); nesting well under way 16/09/10 (OT)

Spotted Shag – 1 juv., Whanganui R mouth, 21/11/10 (LD); 1 juv., Whanganui R mouth, 15/12/10 (LD).

White-faced Heron – 7, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF); 1, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/11/10 (PF);

Nankeen Night Heron – 18 birds counted leaving Kuarapaoa roost and surrounding trees between 20:07 and 20:14, 16/10/10 (PF). This is an increase over 4 on 26/07/10 and 13 on 22/05/10.

Glossy Ibis – 2, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF)

Royal Spoonbill – 5, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF); 3, Koitiata lagoon, Turakina R mouth, 04/09/10 (PF); 6, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF); 6, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/11/10 (PF). Average number on Whanganui R estuary, October – December 2010, 3.8 (range 0 – 9, maximum on 22/10/10, PF).

Black Swan – 2, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF); 8, Koitiata lagoon, Turakina R mouth, 04/09/10 (PF); 1 pr with cygnets, Bason Botanic Garden, 07/09/10 (CRO); 1 pr at Virginia Lake with cygnets, 19/09/10 (OT); 3 ~½-grown cygnets, Whanganui R, City Bridge, 24/12/10 (CRO).

Canada Goose – 9, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF); 1, possibly nesting, Lake Pauri, 29/09/10 (LS); 16, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF); 1, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/11/10 (PF);

Mallard – several broods of recently hatched ducklings, and 1 incubating female (possible Grey x Mallard hybrid) with nest in fork of *Eucalyptus microcorys*, Bason Botanic Gardens, 07/09/10 (CRO: see the following photograph).



New Zealand Shoveler – 2♂, 1♀, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF); 4♂ 2♀, Koitiata lagoon, Turakina R mouth, 04/09/10 (PF).

NZ Falcon – 2 flying together over Mill Rd, Mosston, 01/09/10 (LD)

California Quail – 1 male, Mt View Rd, Wanganui, 15/09/10 (PF); 1-2 males calling, Bason Botanic Garden, 12/12/10 (PF and others)

South Island Pied Oystercatcher – heard calling in flight over Wanganui East/Bastia Hill, just before 6:00 a.m., 22/11/10 (PF)

Variable Oystercatcher – 6, South Beach, 03/10/10 (OT); 3, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF); 4, South Beach, and 2, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/11/10 (OT, PG, PF);

Pied Stilt – 2, Rangitikei R estuary, 4/9/10 (PF); 8, Koitiata lagoon, Turakina R mouth, 04/09/10 (PF); 1, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF); 12, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/11/10 (PF);

Banded Dotterel – 35 at Moana Roa and adjacent Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PG, PF); at least 40 counted there on 25/11/10. Breeding recorded at Moana Roa: 04/09/10 – c/1, 2 x c/3; 09/09/10 – nest with c/1 on 04/09/10 had c/3; 1 pair highly agitated, 10/11/10 (CO); 25/11/10 – c/3 and b/1, a 1-week old chick (PF). A number reported nesting alongside the runway at Wanganui airport, 15/10/10, no further details (Graeme Goldsmith, Wanganui Airport, as reported to PG); one pair with c/1 on 03/12/10 (BS) had c/3 on

07/12/10 (BS, PF) but had failed 08/12/03 (BS).

Black-fronted Dotterel – 1, Koitiata lagoon, Turakina R mouth, 04/09/10 (PF),

Shore Plover – a colour-banded bird, RG-OB, at Moana Roa, Rangitikei estuary, 02/09/10 (SS)

Wrybill – 7, Rangitikei R estuary, 04/09/10 (PF); 2, Whanganui R estuary, 22/10/10 (PG);

Masked Lapwing – large aggregations noted at various localities (Wangaehu Beach Rd, 40, 04/09/10, PF; 156, Moana Roa, 25/11/10 (PF); 58, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/11/10). Breeding August-September onwards: B/3 (<1 wk old), Wanganui airport, and B/1 (<<1 wk old), Ocean Speedway, 13/09/10 (PF);

Turnstone – 3 seen on South Beach between Whanganui and Whangaehu river mouths, 04/12/10 (OT)

Lesser Knot – 1, Whanganui R estuary, 22/10/10 (PG);

Eastern Bar-tailed Godwit – 11, Whanganui R estuary, 22/10/10 (PG); 4, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10 (PF); one male marked with orange ELF, “HP”, position 2 (right tibia), Wanganui R estuary at 39° 57.136’S, 175° 01.286’E, 23/12/10 (PF). This bird originally banded at Mann’s Beach, Corner Inlet, Victoria, about 38°41’S, 146°56’, 26/06/10 (Clive Minton).

Black-backed Gull – large number of pairs with chicks, Whitiāu Ecological Reserve and adjacent upper beach area, 26/11/10 (PG); small, loose colony, along cliff edge, west of Kaikura Stream (Powerhouse Point), Patea: c/1+B/1 (just hatched), B/2 (large downy), 05/12/10 (PF); c/2 and B/3, Whitiāu, Patea, 05/12/10 (CRO).

Red-billed Gull – 3, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/12/10 (PF), after a couple of months when the birds were notably absent.

Black-billed Gull – 2, Whanganui R estuary, 17/11/10 (PF); 2, Whangaehu R estuary, 30/12/10 (PF).

Caspian Tern – 5, Wanganui R estuary, 21/09/10 (PF); 1, Rangitikei R estuary,

25/11/10. Also see Whanganui R estuary survey results (next item).

White-fronted Tern – 33, Rangitikei R estuary, 25/11/10; 1 carrying food to a small stack adjacent to cliffs on coast just west of Kaikura Stream (Powerhouse Point), Patea (39°43.6403’S, 174° 24.8707’E), 05/12/10 (PF);

New Zealand Pigeon – 1 eating kowhai flowers and new willow leaves, Virginia Lake, 24/10/10 (LD)

Rock Dove – common in Wanganui, up to 40 roosting in city centre and spending days on the city bridges (PF); 2, sea cliffs, Kaikura Stream (Powerhouse Point), Patea, 05/12/10 (PF).

Kaka – up to 4 birds recorded at Virginia Lake, Wanganui, over a 3-month period, as follows: 3, 05/09/10 (OT); ~1, 12/09/10 (OT); ~2, 19/09/10 (OT); 2-4, 26/09/10 (OT, Ann Mohrdieck reported by JR); 1, 10/10/10 (OT); 1, 4/11/10 (IS). Single bird feeding on fruit of *Davidia involucrata*, Mt Lees (Rangitikei), 26/10/10 (third-hand report by PT);

Eastern Rosella –1-2 seen recently feeding in grass on roadside, and seen and heard in orchard and adjacent pines, upper Robert’s Ave, Aramaoho, 15/10/10 (AP); 1, upper Robert’s Ave, Aramaoho, 15/10/10, reportedly seen regularly here (PT); 2, Gordon’s Park, 6/11/10 and 14/11/10 (OT); 2, Terere Place, Wanganui, 27/ or 28/11/10 (BotSoc member, Mike Sigley?). Also reported to have moved into Patea area about 3 years ago; now common, with flocks of 10-15 seen on occasions (Mike Parsons, Patea).

Shining Cuckoo – heard calling Papaiti, N of Wanganui, 29/09/10 (LS); calling, Marybank, Wanganui, 3/10/10 (BF); calling along Matarawa Stream, 08/10/10 (PF); 1 watched silently following a grey warbler, St John’s Hill, Wanganui, 09/10/10 (PG); calling Kuarapaoa (Kemp’s Pole), 16/10/10; 1, calling Bason Botanic Garden, 26/10/10 (AD); 2 calling (along with 1 grey warbler singing), Bastia Hill, 19/11/10 (PF); calling Matarawa Stream, 21, 22, 24 Dec 2010 (PF);

Morepork – frequently heard calling Bastia Hill adjacent to Ikitara Rd throughout December 2010 (PF).

Fernbird – 1 heard at Gordon’s Park, mid morning, 09/10/10 (PG); not seen or heard there 12/10/10 (CO)

Grey Warbler – bird(s) calling: St John’s Hill, 09/10/10 (PG); Bastia Hill, 19/11/10 (PF); Gordon Park, 16/12/10 (PF);

Fantail – report of ‘black’ fantails at Gordon Park turned out to be juveniles of common fantail, 16/12/10 (CO, PG, PF). One juvenile photographed, showing generally brown plumage (PG).

Silvereeye – One pair with c/3, nest 1.5 m up in *Coprosma areolata*, lightly covered in a native bindweed, *Calystegia tuguriorum*.

Bellbird – Nest in garden, Ikitara Rd: building 08/10/10-11/10/10; bird sitting 14/10/10 onwards. Fate of nest unknown as I left for overseas 28/10/10 (PF).

Yellowhammer – 1 pr carrying food to nest in box thorn *Lycium ferocissimum*, Whitikau, Patea, 05/12/10 (PF)

Saddleback – many birds heard and seen at Bushy Park, including one group of 10 birds, 26/10/10 (PG).

Wanganui River estuary: wader and waterbird counts

Over the past 4 ½ years, I have been counting waders and waterbirds on the Wanganui R estuary, with occasional inputs from Paul Gibson, Lynne Douglas and others. These data are currently being analysed. In all, I have almost 300 full (all species) or partial (selected species only) counts.

Below are the results of counts made during the period October-December 2010. The dominance of black-backed gulls, which seem to be increasing overall, the fluctuating numbers of royal spoonbill, pied oystercatcher and pied stilt (birds moving through on migration), and the gradual build up of bar-tailed godwits as they arrive from the northern hemisphere, are all notable.

Counts of waders and waterbirds on the Whanganui R estuary between Cobham Bridge and Wharf Street, just upstream from the port, October-December 2010. (* = incomplete count)

Species	Date Time	4/10/10 9:15	6/10/10 10:10	22/10/10 11:45	17/11/10 9:05	25/11/10 13:50	3/12/10 8:55	7/12/10 10:15	23/12/10 11:40	26/12/10 11:45	29/12/10 15:00
Royal Spoonbill		3	3	9	6	0	0	2	1	6	8
Pied Oystercatcher		0	0	0	2	1	8	7	2	8	2
Variable Oystercatcher		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Spurwing Plover		1	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
Pied Stilt		4	0	0	2	30	50	49	66	49	96
Lesser Knot		0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Wrybill		0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bar-tailed Godwit		3	2	11	6	7	11	11	17	17	18
Black-backed Gull		49	43	71	200	185	401	251	50*	318	186
Redbilled Gull		0	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	3	0
Blackbilled Gull		0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caspian Tern		1	2	4	4	0	3	3	3	3	1
Whitefronted Tern		0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0
White-faced Heron		0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	0
Black Shag		1	2	0	4	4	1	9	9	5	5
Little Black Shag		4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black Swan		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mallard		0	0	0	27	7	0	0	5	28	6
Paradise Shelduck		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Monthly meetings, 2011

All meetings are held on the last Monday of the month. The meetings are held at St Mary's Church complex, 1 Campbell Street, Wanganui, starting at 7:30 p.m. Attendance at the meetings is free. Come along and contribute.

Date	Speaker and topic, where known
Monday 28 th February	Paul Gibson: <i>Birds of South-eastern Queensland</i>
Monday 28 th March	Annual General Meeting. Discussion on <i>Gardening for Birds</i>
Monday 25 th April	Peter Frost: <i>What is unique about African birds?</i>
Monday 30 th May	Speaker and topic to be announced
Monday 27 th June	Mid winter <i>Bird Quiz</i>
Monday 25 th July	Speaker and topic to be announced
Monday 29 th August	" <i>Show and tell</i> ": bring along items of interest — photographs, books, feathers, even your observations — and tell us about them
Monday 26 th September	Peter Frost: <i>What have we learned from five years of surveying the birds of the Whanganui R estuary?</i>
Monday 31 st October	Speaker and topic to be announced
Monday 28 th November	DVD and discussion: <i>Fishing for a Living</i>

You will notice that quite a few speaking slots are currently vacant. Anyone willing and able to talk on a topic, illustrated or not, should contact Peter Frost (birds.wanganui@xtra.co.nz or phone 06-343 1648).

Items wanted for newsletter

Do you have any observations, photographs, reports of field trips, or relevant stories that we can reproduce in the newsletter? Have you been somewhere interesting lately, not only locally but elsewhere in New Zealand, or even overseas? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Please send any items to the newsletter editor (birds.wanganui@xtra.co.nz). I am trying to produce a newsletter every 3-4 months, so the deadline for the next issue is the end of April. Remember, this is your newsletter.

About the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ)

"Fostering the Study, Knowledge and Enjoyment of Birds"

The OSNZ was founded in 1939, and became an incorporated society in 1953. It currently has just over 1200 paying members world-wide, ranging from professional ornithologists and government institutions in New Zealand and overseas, through experienced amateur observers and students at secondary and tertiary educational institutions, to newcomers wanting to increase their knowledge of birds. No special qualifications are required for admission and membership is open to anyone interested in birds. Details and application forms are available on the Society's website at <http://osnz.org.nz/join.htm> or from the Membership Secretary, Yvonne Mackenzie, PO Box 29-532 Fendalton, Christchurch 8540, NZ (email: yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com).

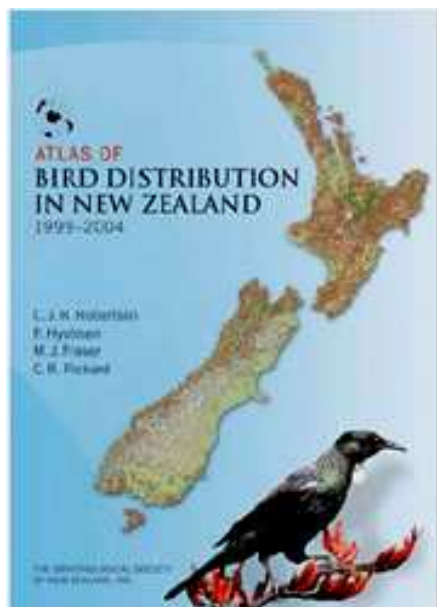
Members are entitled to:

- Participate in all activities and meetings of the Society
- Receive all free publications (including the scientific journal **Notornis**, and the general interest magazine **Southern Bird**, both 4 times per year), and have access to the library and records of the Society
- Vote in elections to appoint Officers of the Society

Membership fees (effective 1st January 2011) are:

Ordinary Member	NZ \$70
Full-time Student Member	NZ \$35
Family member *	NZ \$17.50
Institution/Group member	NZ \$140
Corporate Member	NZ \$350
Life Member (40 years and over)	NZ \$1,380

* A Family Member is someone living in a household with an Ordinary Member, Life Member, or a Fellow (appointed), and does not receive the Society's publications



Birding Wanganui is the local branch of the OSNZ, but is open to anyone living in and around Wanganui who is interested in birds and birding. Membership of the group is free. Members share information on a regular basis. Evening meetings (talks, slide shows) are held on the last Monday of each month at St Joseph's Hall, adjacent to St Mary's Catholic Church, 1 Campbell Street. Field trips are arranged periodically. For further details contact Peter Frost 06 343 1638 or 021 103 7730 (email: birds.wanganui@xtra.co.nz).

If you are not a member of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ), the parent body of our local branch, why not join? You can get further details from Peter Frost or from the web at <http://www.osnz.org.nz/join.htm>. **As an incentive, the Society is still giving new members a free copy of the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004** (worth \$98 if you bought it from the Society). This offer holds only while stocks last, so join now and get your copy. Of course, we hope that once you have joined and got your free copy of the Atlas you will stay on as a member and become involved in the various activities of the Society.