



THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

## Wellington Region Newsletter

November 2007

[www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz) and [www.notornis.org.nz](http://www.notornis.org.nz)

It is with sadness that we record of the death of **Errol Stapleton** of Raumati Beach, who died in April. Errol was a long-time member of the society, and was a keen beach patroller. We offer our sincere condolences to Pamela and others in Errol's family, and to his many friends.

### A Letter from the President

The following letter is circulated at the request of the society President, Prof. Richard Holdaway.

21 August 2007.

Hi All,

First instalment of a quasi-monthly epistle to the Regions.

First, an apology to the membership in the Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Wanganui, and Manawatu Regions for my not having been able to fulfil the commitment to visit and give a talk and discuss OSNZ with the membership; I am still "under the weather" from a particularly nasty bug. I will endeavour to make good my promised trip as soon as something can be arranged.

On a much more positive note, on August 13 (the day of the Atlas launch in Wellington) I signed a contract for services on behalf of OSNZ with the company of our new Executive Officer; Ms. Ingrid Hutzler will be providing those services from September 5, and in the September *Southern Bird* there will be a brief biography and an overview of what the EO services will entail for the Society and what we plan to achieve in the first year.

Dame Sian Elias, the Chief Justice of New Zealand, launched the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand-2004 at Government House on August 13 in her capacity as The Administrator of the Government, deputizing for the Governor General, who was on an official visit to Samoa and the Tokelau Islands. Nearly 200 members and those associated with the production of the atlas attended, and heard speeches by Dame Sian, the Minister of Conservation, and a letter written by the Director of Birdlife International.

The media response to the launch has been very good, with front page coverage in the *New Zealand Herald* and good column inches and pictures in other dailies, and a couple of interviews on National Radio so far. Most if not all OSNZ members should have received their *gratis* copy by the end of the month, and we hope that it is a spur to greater efforts in observing our birds. A report and transcripts of the speeches will appear in the September *Southern Bird*.

Council took the opportunity of the launch to present Chris Robertson, the Atlas Convenor and mastermind, and long-term significant contributor to the Society and New Zealand ornithology, with his certificate for the Society's highest award, a Fellowship of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. I am sure that all members will join in congratulating Chris. An appreciation of Chris's contributions will appear in the September *Southern Bird*.

The March *Notornis* is now on line and should have already arrived in member's letter boxes. The June issue will be published within a few weeks and the September issue should be on time.

Council will be meeting in Christchurch on October 13 and 14; if there are any pressing issues you would like brought to Council's attention, please send details to any Councillor or to Claudia as soon as possible.

Just a brief note this time, but I thought that these items should be transmitted to the Regions and membership as soon as possible.

Cheers.

Prof. Richard N. Holdaway  
President

## Greetings from the OSNZ Executive Officer

Ms. Ingrid Hutzler, recently appointed Executive Officer for the Ornithological Society, has written an introductory letter about herself to all regions. I know that Wellington members will join with me in welcoming Ingrid and we look forward to working closely with her in her new and challenging role in enhancing the running of the society.

19 September, 2007

Dear OSNZ Regional Representatives!

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I was born in Germany, but decided 16 years ago that New Zealand is a much nicer place to live. My passion for nature led to a B.Sc in Biological Science through Massey University, several years of monitoring endangered birds and threatened plants for the Department of Conservation, and an active membership with OSNZ. I love the outdoors and spend most of my (non-working) time bird watching, tramping, kayaking and sailing.

The main objective of my role as the Executive Officer is to enhance the efficient running of the Society by providing support, reports, feedback, and by reminding everyone about important actions. Above all, my aim is to make your birding life more rewarding.

I am looking forward to meeting you all very soon.

Kind regards and happy birding.

Ingrid Hutzler

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## Monthly Meetings

The venue for our monthly meetings is the Head Office of the Department of Conservation (DOC) ("Conservation House" – Te Whare Atawhai), 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington. Conservation House is located on the south side of Manners Street, between the western end of Manners Mall and Willis Street. Please wait outside the glass entrance doors for a DOC staff member / OSNZ member to admit you through the entrance security system and to the meeting room on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Access is available between 7:20 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. Our meetings are held on the first Monday of the month (January and June excepted), commencing at 7:45 p.m.

## Programme from November 2007 to May 2008

**November 5<sup>th</sup>:** Dr. Kerry-Jayne Wilson, Senior Lecturer in Ecology. Bio-protection and Ecology Division, Lincoln University, Canterbury. "*Seabirds, Biological Constraints and Conservation Concerns*". Dr. Wilson will present a broad review of issues concerning seabird conservation.

**November 17<sup>th</sup>** (or 18<sup>th</sup> if postponed because of bad weather). "*Kapiti Island Coastal Bird Survey*". Led by Dr. Colin Miskelly, DOC. As advised by e-mail recently interest in participating in the Kapiti Island coastal bird survey is high and the 14 places available are now filled. Other names are on a reserves list in the event that Saturday members withdraw, or if the survey is postponed (because of bad weather) until Sunday.

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Ms. Delia Small, DOC, Wellington. "*Progress with Studies on Orange-fronted Parakeets*".

**December 8<sup>th</sup> :** "*Manawatu Estuary Wader Field Trip*". Another field trip is proposed to the Manawatu Estuary to observe the diversity of wading and other birds at this accessible site. Many more godwits and knots have recently arrived compared with our visit in September. Tides on 8<sup>th</sup> December; high 10.18 a.m.; low, 4.25 p.m. If you are planning to come it is suggested that you arrive at the Foxton Beach carpark (near the campground) by 9.45 am for good viewing of the waders. Let the RR know if you plan to come, or require transport.

**December 22<sup>nd</sup>:** "*Banding of Caspian tern and black-backed gulls*". Field trip to Onoke Spit. It is hoped that a field visit can be arranged in conjunction with the Wairarapa Region. Arrangements are being discussed with the Wairarapa members and will be advised at the December meeting.

**February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008:** "*Members Evening*". An opportunity for members to make short presentations on their summer bird watching, bird study and bird conservation activities.

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008:** Ms. Jennifer Vinton, M.Sc Honours Student, Victoria University of Wellington. "*Urban Flyers – a study of bird movement in suburban Wellington*". Jennifer will describe her studies on the movement of birds within parts of Wellington City and what her results might mean to the wider community.

**March 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Easter).** "*Dabchick Survey of Ponds and Wetlands, Kapiti and Horowhenua and Manawatu Districts*". Led by Ian Armitage, RR. Expressions of interest in participating in the dabchick survey are welcome. Details will be advised by Ian in early 2008. In general, the survey will involve members, or small groups of members, being assigned responsibility for surveying ponds and wetlands from Paraparaumu/Waikanae northwards to about the Rangitikei River. The Survey will be arranged in conjunction with Manawatu Members of the society. Some funding from the society will be provided to defray petrol and other operational costs.

**7<sup>th</sup> April, 2008:** Dr. Ralph Powlesland. Scientist, DOC, Wellington. "*It's not all about Birds! - a descriptive story about birds and wildlife in Sabah, Malaysia*". An entertaining account of a journey through parts of Sabah made by four Wellington members in August 2007.

**April, 2008:** “*Kapiti Island Bird Survey*”. Led by Dr. Colin Miskelly, DOC. A long-term survey of forest birds on parts of Kapiti Island will commence in April and will involve regular participation by members for three years. Overnight stays on the island will be necessary. Society members have been undertaking forest bird counts on Kapiti Island since the 1970s and we are, once again, invited by DOC to participate in this new survey. Details, including dates, will be advised by Colin in early 2008.

**5<sup>th</sup> May, 2008:** Ms. Raewyn Empson. Conservation Scientist, Karori Wildlife Sanctuary.  
“*Recent Progress in bird studies and conservation in the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary*”.

**June, 2008:** No local meeting. The OSNZ conference and AGM will be held in Kaikoura in early June (Queen’s Birthday weekend). Details will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Southern Bird*.

## Notable and Recent Bird Sightings

During the winter and into the spring, **shore plovers** have continued to be seen regularly at Titahi Bay and southwards to Green Point, and also on Petone Beach - by Barry Dent, Sue Freitag, George Pope, Ian Armitage, Andy Falshaw and John Allan. Earlier, one **shore plover** was seen at the Waikanae River estuary and one bird has been reported from the Rangitikei River estuary.



*Shore plover RW-YB on Petone Beach, 4-11-07; photo by George Pope.*

Janice Woon saw a **shore plover** in Masterton that has since returned to Mt. Bruce. Continue to look out for **shore plovers** when you are on local coastlines as they could turn up anywhere – and please remember to report any sightings.

During the winter, Tina Troup heard some very loud **morepork** calls at Wadestown. Stuart Nicholson heard a **chaffinch** in full song on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

**Pied shags** are roosting and breeding in macrocarpa trees at Waimanu Lagoon at Waikanae – seen by Janice Woon, Allan

Munro, Grace Suckling, Jean Luke and Mary McEwen. Colin Miskelly and Ralph Powlesland have located a new **pied shag** colony of several nests at Moorhouse Point, Pauatahanui Inlet, near Paremata.

Stuart Nicholson saw a mixed flock of about 30 **yellowhammers**, about 30 **redpolls**, and some **goldfinches** at Tanera Park in Brooklyn on the 1<sup>st</sup> October. Colin Miskelly was regularly seeing a flock of **yellowhammers** at the Basin Reserve every week-day morning at around this date.

Janice Woon spotted a baby **dabchick** on an adult’s back at Paraparaumu, and Rod Orange came across a **dabchick** at Otaihanga.

Keep looking out for banded **tuis**, and **silveryeyes** and record any observations of **kereru** for the Kereru Discovery Project.

On recent surveys of birds in the Pencarrow lakes and coastline **N.Z. scaup** continue to be seen on the lakes and **banded dotterels** are numerous on the coastline and on the dunes near the lakes.



*Banded dotterel at Lake Kohangapiripiri, near Pencarrow, 3-11-07; photo by Ian Armitage.*

## Beach Patrols

Over the winter, Jean Luke's beach patrolling finds have included **common diving petrel, cape pigeon, white-headed petrel, prion** species, and a **gannet**. In early spring, Jean found two further **white-headed petrels**, as well as **fairy prions**, a **broad-billed prion**, and a **Caspian tern**. In July Reg Cotter came across a **fluttering shearwater**, a banded **black-backed gull**, and a **feral goose** on Petone Beach. Mike Imber found 20 birds of various species in one day in August, covering five kilometres of beach in Kapiti-Horowhenua area. Beach patrol record cards are available from the RR and are always worth having with you when you are walking on a beach; you just never know what species may be found !

Ian Armitage has recently taken over data analysis nationally of beach patrol records. During 2008 he will update the database (from the year 2000) and assemble summaries of recent findings. Ian will work closely with the Beach Patrol Convenor, Lloyd Esler of Invercargill.

## East Harbour Regional Park Bird Survey

Surveys of birds in the South Block of the East Harbour Regional Park, involving observations at the Pencarrow lakes and on the adjacent Cook Strait coastline, concluded in November. Observations have always been made mid-week to minimise disturbance to birds that can be caused by numerous weekend visitors. 33 visits were made, as follows: 2004, 2; 2005, 10; 2006, 11; 2007, 10. Detailed analysis of count data will be reported in 2008 but some early findings are:

- The number of species recorded on the lakes and coastline combined at each visit has gradually increased from less than 20 in 2004 to more than 30 in 2007.
- The total number of birds of all species observed varies greatly from month to month but is mostly in the range of 400 to 700. The minimum noted was a surprisingly low 213 birds (on 27-11-2006); the maximum was 1,194 birds (on 16-1-2007).
- N.Z. Scaup are now regularly seen on both lakes and are probably breeding on Lake Koangatera. Scaup were rarely seen before 2004.
- Shoveler are regularly seen on both lakes. Grey teal are common in the winter.
- Black shags are often scarce. Little shags seem to be more numerous than formerly.
- Bellbirds are now recorded in the scrublands beside Lake Kohangatera – a new location.

## Shore Plovers at Green Pt.

Several members have monitored the occurrence of shore plover at Green Point, two kms south of Titahi Bay since June and have provided data to DOC as a part of the shore plover recovery programme. Some plovers regularly fly to and from Mana Island, sometimes daily, but at least for a few weeks in the winter some birds were seen at Green Point regularly and may have been roosting overnight. 41 shore plovers were released on Mana Island earlier this year and of these nine have been recorded at Green Point. Some were also seen at Titahi Bay and recently others have been seen on Petone Beach. Records from 17 visits made between June and October by Barry Dent, Sue Freitag, John Allan, Andy Falshaw and

Ian Armitage are summarised in the following table. Observations will continue for several months yet and members are welcome to visit Green Point and contribute towards assembling the records database. And please remember to look out for and record shore plovers (and their bands) when you are walking on Wellington coastlines as shore plovers could turn up anywhere. Recording forms are available from the RR.

Band Combinations & Gender	No. of Observations
BR-BY ♀	1
BR-GY ♀	8
BR-OB ♂	9
BR-RO ♂	10
RO-OG ♂	4
RO-WY ♂	2
RO-YO ♀	12
RW-YO	6



*Shore plover RO-YO at Green Point, 9/8/07; photo by Ian Armitage*

## Manawatu River Estuary Field Trip

An enthusiastic group of eight members met at the Manawatu River Estuary on 29 September in warm sunny weather and spent nearly three hours watching 42 bar-tailed godwits and five red knots and recording band and flag combinations. Godwits have the irritating habit of often standing on one leg when resting so the task of recording band combinations is made that much more difficult! - but we did manage to record three complete band combinations on five banded birds and we felt pleased with this. Other species seen during the day included three wrybill, three little egret, six Pacific golden plovers and, to our surprise, about 20 black-billed gulls.



*Bar-tailed godwits (two banded and flagged), red knots (one banded and flagged), black-billed gulls and one black-backed gull (juv), Manawatu River Estuary, 29/9/07; photo by Ian Armitage.*

## Recent Letters from the OSNZ Executive Officer

### Wader Colour Banding Project

2 November 2007

Dear OSNZ Member.

The **wader colour banding project** 'officially' ended on 30 June 2007 – we would like to thank you very much for your efforts in band searching/sighting, which have contributed to the success of this project. The data are currently being analysed and the final report should be available in the latter half of 2008.

We would like to tidy up the accounts for this project. Please would you complete the **attached claim form** for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and **submit it to me by 1 December 2007**. (Ed: forms are available from the RR)

Although the project has 'officially' ended, we intend to continue to study the population of marked birds with the emphasis on studying survival – this being particularly important since the New Zealand population appears to have suffered a substantial decline in the past decade. We hope to be able to continue to provide some financial assistance for fuel costs for future band spotting – details will be provided in due course.

Funds have already been disbursed for "**Colour Band Searches**" up to 30 June 2006, and we are now asking for applications for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The claim form is attached. (Ed: forms are available from the RR).

Kind regards.

*Ingrid Hutzler*  
Executive Officer

### An Appeal for Archival Material

29 October 2007

To all OSNZ Members!

As you may know, the OSNZ is in the process of developing a comprehensive archive for ornithological records. The archival material will be catalogued and made accessible as a living resource for future reference and studies. If you hold any archival material or know of any material, can you please send us the following information:

- 1) What type is the material (old note books, local survey photos, etc)?
- 2) Where is it held (physical location)?
- 3) What is the size (e.g A4 Folder, 5cm depth)?
- 4) Who holds the material?

If you don't have any archival material - do you know of anyone that does? Your help in tracking down this information is much appreciated!

Kind regards.

*Ingrid Hutzler*  
Executive Officer

## A migration story of a Mana Island Sooty Shearwater

When David Cornick, Ros Batcheler and others were feeding fledgling fluttering shearwaters on Mana Island over the last two summers they found two dead sooty shearwaters near the island coastline. Both birds were carrying geolocation recording devices (loggers) that enable the location of birds to be automatically recorded. The loggers had been fitted to several sooty shearwaters that breed on Mana Island.

Dr. Graeme Taylor (DOC) has advised that although the logger on one dead bird was not functioning and did not reveal any data the other device was functional and on analysis has revealed a considerable amount of location and date data about where and when the sooty shearwater had travelled.

Here is an edited transcript of the interesting migration story of our sooty shearwater, kindly made available to OSNZ by Graeme. Not bad for a local bird bred on Mana Island that we are becoming to know so well – but rather sad that the shearwater died so soon, but then this valuable migration information may not have been gained if it had survived.

The sooty shearwater spent four days after capture (and fitting of the data logger) in March 2005 in the Tasman Sea and near Mana Island, it then headed out to the Chatham Rise and flew to the east of the Chathams. The next 10 days were around the time of the equinox so we couldn't get latitude data but from longitude data it stayed to the east of the Chatham Islands. We can't tell if it occasionally returned to feed the chick during this period and headed to the SE again, or whether it had finished feeding the chick. Between 31 March and 5 April it was well to the SE of the Antipodes Islands and over very deep water. It then moved southwards towards Antarctica and was south of the polar front over the deep ocean NE of the Ross Sea. On 8 April it began migrating eastwards in the high roaring forties, passing south of Easter Island. Three days later it was well to the SW of the Juan Fernandez Islands and a day later was west of Chiloe Island off the coast of Chile. From 13 to 22 April it fed in seas south and west of Juan Fernandez Islands. On 23 April it started heading northwards past Sala-y-Gomez Island and stayed near here for five days. It then headed northwards and crossed the equator on 30 April well to the north of Easter Island. It tracked north and NW to the SE of Hawaii and was midway between Hawaii and Los Angeles on 5 May. It then headed mostly northwards until 9 May when it turned and moved towards the coast of USA, near Oregon State, reaching there on 11 May. The bird then headed up the coast past Vancouver Island and into the Gulf of Alaska, arriving on 20 May. It then spent the several few months in the vicinity of Kodiak Island and in the Gulf of Alaska, occasionally flying to the Aleutian Islands. By 10 September the equinox took out latitude information again. However, by 29 September it was obvious that our Mana Island sooty shearwater was heading south again and the longitude fixes had started to bear westwards. The bird crossed the equator on 4 October north of the Marquesas Islands. It then headed mainly westwards through the Line and Phoenix Islands, passed near Samoa on 9 October, then NE of Fiji, before heading southwards but it was still north of the Kermadec Islands on 11 October. Unfortunately at this stage the logger started to go off line and there are long gaps where no data was recorded. There is a single location record near Mana Island on 22 October, then either no data, or nonsense data in short spurts were recorded, until the sooty shearwater was retrieved dead on Mana Island in early 2006.

We now know a little more where our sooty shearwater travelled and the route it took on its return to Mana Island.

## Notes on Recent Wellington Region Talks

2<sup>nd</sup> July: Dr. Graeme Taylor from the Department of Conservation reviewed the conservation management of petrels. New Zealand has 85 breeding seabird species, of which 35 are endemic, 52 species are at risk of extinction, and three species have populations of less than 150 individuals. The Chatham Island petrel was confined to one island (Rangitira) and was threatened by nest competition from the broad-billed prion. Graeme explained that broad-billed prions disrupted 90 percent of breeding attempts at the burrows of Chatham Island petrels. All petrel burrows are now protected by "Neoprene" burrow flaps (the product used for making wetsuits and waders); the petrels get used to the flaps and these are effective in reducing conflicts with the broad-billed prions. 200 Chatham Island petrel chicks were transferred to Pitt Island between 2002 and 2005; the first adults returned in 2005 and several chicks have now been bred. Thank you Graeme for your fascinating talk.

6<sup>th</sup> August: Dr. David Houston from the Department of Conservation talked about his recent studies into penguin foraging, using radio-transmitters as a primary feature of his methodology. David explained that there is variation in the use of the water column between the different species. Little blue penguins at Oamaru undertake long-range trips of up to 25 kilometres



offshore, and can travel about 75 kilometres in one day; they also make short-range trips. Male Snares Is. penguins, during incubation, take long trips eastwards to the upwelling currents. Females during the chick-guard stage only make short trips northwards towards a “Chlorophyll-a” concentration (revealed by some rather clever photography!). David said that yellow-eyed penguins forage about 27 kilometres offshore each day in a pattern of parallel tracks, 6 metres between the tracks, and parallel to the shoreline, which are currently thought to be trawl fishing marks which created a disturbance on the seafloor. It was an engaging talk and we thank David for his really interesting presentation.

3<sup>rd</sup> September: Dr. Murray Williams, now retired from DOC, presented an overview of the adaptations of waterfowl to the environment of the subantarctic islands. Wildfowl have a pre-adaptation to salt-water environments. The existence of strong flying species such as pintail and widgeon lend these species to dispersive or migratory behaviour. These features lead to an ability to colonise new sites. Murray described and explained the changes that occur in response to waterfowl colonising the new subantarctic environment. These changes are: a lowered energy demand, flightlessness, a reduction in body size, marine feeding, reduced clutch size, changes in egg size, longer incubation periods, an advanced developmental stage of ducklings at hatching, increased sexual dimorphism (i.e. different male and female body sizes), year-round territoriality, long term pair bonding, bi-parental care of the young, juveniles leading a furtive existence, a terrestrial habit, and simplification of displays. Our thanks to Murray for a most interesting and informative talk.

1<sup>st</sup> October: Mr. Chris Robertson, Fellow of the OSNZ and Convenor of the society’s Bird Atlas Project, presented a retrospective view of the various atlases of bird distribution in New Zealand. Three atlases have been produced: an interim atlas in 1978, the first full edition in 1985, and now the recently-released 2007 atlas. Chris explained that the recording of numbers of birds of a species on the national scale was probably not so important for the plentiful species but it certainly is for all other species. The importance of recording the habitats where birds are found cannot be over-emphasized and Chris asks that bird location and habitat information should always be linked and recorded. Pine forests support a high level of bird species diversity, especially pine forests surrounded by native vegetation. Further research opportunities are clearly apparent, for example, new studies on the incidence of shining cuckoos in the South Island. Bird atlases provide a national picture of bird distribution and can provide an excellent basis for an awareness of and understanding change in bird distribution. Our sincere thanks to Chris for his review.

## Progress Report on the Garden Bird Survey, 2007

The following progress report about the **2007 garden bird survey** have been extracted from the LandCare website, [www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/results2007.asp](http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/results2007.asp) Many Wellington OSNZ members participated in the survey.

Dr. Eric Spurr, Project Convenor, writes:

There was an overwhelming public response to the July 2007 Garden Bird Survey. To date, more than 1,800 survey forms have been returned, and more are coming in daily.

Lots of people said how much they enjoyed doing the survey, and provided extra comments about the birds normally present in their gardens but not present during the one hour of the survey. A common comment was, “I didn’t see as many

birds as I normally do.” Poor weather was partly to blame for this.

Some people returned up to nine survey forms, while others included photographs of their gardens and bird feeders, and even recipes of food to give to the birds. All ages participated, from 5 year olds (with their parents or grandparents) up to a 98 year old.

A preliminary analysis of about 20% of the forms that have been returned shows blackbirds

occurred in 90% of gardens, house sparrows in 83%, silvereyes in 81%, starlings in 54%, and other species in less than 50% of gardens.

Considering all gardens (whether or not species were present), house sparrows and silvereyes were recorded in the greatest number at any one time (average 7.7 per garden during the one hour of observation). The next most abundant birds were blackbirds and starlings (2.4 per garden).

Considering only gardens where the species was present, rock pigeons occurred in greatest numbers at any one time (average 13.3 per garden), followed by silvereyes (9.5 per garden) and house sparrows (9.2 per garden). The maximum number of silvereyes seen at once was 70, house sparrows 52, and rock pigeons 50. The high numbers of silvereyes and house sparrows is at least partly a result of people feeding birds. About 60% of participants fed birds with food scraps, bread, seeds, nuts, fat, fruit, and/or sugar-water.

Most of the surveys analysed to date (92%) were done in home gardens, 4% in school grounds, and 3% in public parks. Some schools did the survey as a class exercise.

These figures could change as more surveys are analysed.

Some people expressed concern that the length of observation period, time of day, size of observation area, vegetation characteristics of different gardens, and weather could all affect the number of birds counted. This is true, but is not important because the aim of the survey is to monitor whether garden bird populations change over the years. (A secondary aim is to increase public interest in birds and the natural environment.) The length of observation period will be the same in subsequent years, and it is assumed that there will be a similar range of times of day, sizes of observation area, garden vegetation characteristics, and weather conditions each year. It is interesting that the results are similar to last year's very small, trial, garden bird survey.

This is the first comprehensive survey of birds in New Zealand gardens. A final report will be available on this website when all the data has been received and analysed. It is planned to repeat the survey next year.

## Next Newsletter – contributions are wanted!

The next newsletter is due out in March 2008. If any members have any written items or photographs to be included, or any news at all about birds and their environments please contact Sally or Ian.

Photocopying of this Newsletter has kindly been provided by *Beca*: Engineers, Planners and Managers