



OSNZ news

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for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

Please note that sightings recorded in this Newsletter are subject
to confirmation.

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NOTE: Deadline for the September issue
will be 20th August.

Eastern Bay of Plenty coastal survey

From 18-20 January, I surveyed estuaries and beaches from Ohiwa east to Cape Runaway in the Bay of Plenty. Near Opotiki, 40 dead seabirds were recovered from 11 km of sandy flat beach. These included 6 Grey-faced Petrels and 1 White-faced Storm Petrel. At the eastern end of the beach is the Waiaua Estuary and birds seen at this small rivermouth included 1 Golden Plover, 6 N.Z. Dotterels, 1 SIPO and 8 VOC. However, the biggest surprise was 5 adult Black-billed Gulls which were herding 9 fully-fledged chicks to the river. This is the first coastal breeding area of this species that I know in the Bay of Plenty.

East of Waiaua, the beaches and rivers are mainly shingle and beach patrolling was less successful. The Motu Rivermouth has breeding colonies of White-fronted Terns and Red-billed Gulls. No migrant waders were seen along this coast. However, large numbers of Buller's Shearwaters and Fluttering Shearwaters, with the occasional Short-tailed and Flesh-footed Shearwaters were observed flying north-east along the coast.

Whangaparaoa Beach proved the 'find' of the survey, the highlight being the discovery of 2 pairs of breeding N.Z. Dotterels. This greatly extends the known range of the species in the Bay of Plenty. A patrol of the 2.7 km sandy flat beach yielded 44 birds, including yet another Wilson's Storm Petrel, and 1 probable immature Long-tailed Skua. Fourteen species were recovered in total.

In general, beach patrolling has been unproductive in the Bay of Plenty this spring and summer, probably due to the strong offshore winds. Regular patrolling by Ron Bourne at Waiotahi/Ohiwa has brought rewards. A Blue Petrel and a Gannet, banded in January 1966 at White Island, are two of the birds he has recovered.

GRAEME TAYLOR

North-west Australia wader expedition

Readers will remember the request I placed in *OSNZ news* 24, for people to report sightings of colour-dyed waders to the Australasian Wader Studies group or to CSIRO in Canberra, Australia. These birds were banded on the A.W.-S.G. North-west Australia Wader Study Expedition, between 17 August and 10 September 1982. The dye on the underparts will have faded by now but may still be conspicuous on the birds' underwing coverts.

As a result of the expedition valuable count data were collected on wader arrival between Broome and Port Hedland, Western Australia. The expedition arrived only three days before the first major influx of migrant waders from the north. From an initial overwintering population of about 40,000 birds, numbers had increased to nearly 300,000 by the end of the expedition in mid-September. A short trip in November yielded a total of 564,000 birds on this stretch of coast. Of the species counted, Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers, Large Sand Plovers, Great Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits made up the largest numbers. As well, there were significant numbers of Grey-tailed Tattler,

Greenshank, Oriental Plover and Red Knot.

Cannon-netting and mist-netting in August/September resulted in 3,674 waders being caught, banded and colour-dyed. Twenty-two species were involved, including Red-necked Stint (996), Curlew Sandpiper (863), Large Sand Plover (582), Great Knot (429), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (165), Red-capped Plover (145) and Terek Sandpiper (98). Lesser numbers of birds caught included Red Knot, Grey-tailed Tattler, Oriental and Mongolian Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Broad-billed Sandpipers.

Of the birds colour-dyed, 17 were resighted away from the Broome-Port Hedland area: 2 unexpectedly further north on Adele Island; a bird originally caught in Tasmania, retrapped in the north-west and subsequently resighted and actually caught in Tasmania again; and 14 in mid-southern Victoria. This demonstrates that waders which spend the southern summer in south-eastern Australia pass through the north-west of the continent. Another expedition is planned for October/November 1983 and New Zealand wader enthusiasts are very welcome to participate.

BRETT LANE, *Australasian Wader Studies Group Co-ordinator*

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the Annual General Meeting held in Christchurch on 21 May 1983 called for a Special General Meeting of the Society. This Special General Meeting will consider raising the 1984 subscription for ordinary membership to \$20.00, with pro rata increases for other forms of membership.

The Special General Meeting will be held in the School Room, Auckland Museum, at 7.45 p.m. on Tuesday 6 September 1983

R. S. SLACK,
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

Rare Birds Committee

There have been a few changes in the Rare Birds Committee lately. The former Secretary, John Squire, has moved to the largest of New Zealand's offshore islands — Australia. Our new President, Beth Brown, is welcomed to the Committee and Dick Sibson has been co-opted to remain on the Committee. Their combined talents will be a good addition to the Committee. The remaining Committee members are Ben Bell, Brian Bell, Barrie Heather, Paul Sagar and the Secretary.

Some interesting records have been received in recent months, including an old record sent to us by Roger Sutton. This was of a Chinstrap Penguin found near Invercargill on 1/12/80. The bird weighed only 2.7 kg and Dr John Warham has advised that the normal weight should be 3.5-4.0 kg. There will always be a slight doubt as to whether the bird got to NZ without assistance but the good photographic evidence supplied made acceptance of the identification an easy task.

Similarly, photographs taken of a King Penguin at Broad Bay, Stewart Island, on 10/2/83 provided another good record. The Australian Tree Martins recorded previously from Berwick were joined by 2 Fairy Martins in February and March 1983. This record was also accepted.

There are a number of other sightings still under consideration. These include a small wader seen at the Drainage Board Ponds in Auckland on 12/1/83, which may have been a Semi-Palmated Sandpiper. Small waders are notoriously difficult to identify but the observer has provided a very full description for us to study. A report of a possible Black Falcon from the South Island's West Coast in early March, and a Fork-tailed Swift seen briefly near Te Anau on 10/5/83 are recent submissions.

JOHN FENNELL, *Secretary*

News from the AGM

The AGM was held at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, on the weekend of 21/22 May. Despite the atrocious weather conditions about 90 members came from as far afield as Whangarei and Invercargill and enjoyed a varied and interesting programme.

Council met on the Friday and considered a full agenda before the end of a long day. This included consideration of committee and scheme annual reports, most of which are produced elsewhere in this issue. The proposed national wader census was discussed and it was agreed that all regions should be encouraged to

complete wader counts during November 1983. Following this, further comment will be sought from RRs. National surveys of Black-fronted Terns, Yellowheads and Whiteheads/Long-tailed Cuckoos have made good progress and some results will be available soon.

It was proposed that a Field Study Course be held in South Canterbury in January 1984 (full details in the next issue). A revised issue of the Field Guide is planned for 1985.

Two new Regional Representatives were appointed: Paddy Latham in the Bay of Plenty and Russell Thomas in Wellington. Paddy replaces Roy Weston who retired after 20+ years as RR, a remarkable achievement.

While Regional Representatives met on Saturday morning several carloads of brave souls ventured into the murk to catch glimpses of waterfowl through the driving rain. Anyone would have been forgiven for thinking that they were attending a Wellington AGM!

The afternoon programme began with Dr John Warham presenting the seabirds of Midway Island to a fascinated audience. Sue Michelsen followed with some intriguing facts about the biology of our endemic Rock Wrens. After a short break, Dr Ben Bell told us a little about his trip to the Moscow IOC. The final speaker was Sandy Bartle, who presented an impressive and convincing account of his continuing long-term study of Westland Black Petrels.

The Annual General Meeting resulted in the election of Beth Brown as President and the re-election of Dr P. C. Bull, D. E. Crockett and P. M. Sagar to Council. The President, Mr R. B. Sibson, announced that the 1983 Falla Memorial Award had been awarded to Mr A. T. (Sandy) Edgar for his nearly 20 years of active ornithology in NZ and especially for his stimulation of group activity among OSNZ members. The Junior Member Award was presented to Roger Mayhill of Waikato. Both announcements were received with acclamation.

The continuing bad weather caused the cancellation of the field trip planned for Sunday but instead members were able to attend further talks, a moult workshop, watch natural history films and spend time talking birds. Don Hadden provided an excellent slide show and talk about the birds of Bougainville and David Melville stimulated a lot of interest in the newly-organised moult recording scheme. In fact there was such interest in recording moult that a workshop was organised after some specimens were borrowed from the Canterbury Museum. Thanks are

due to Peter Harper for making the facilities of the Department of Extension Studies available to us for these activities.

PAUL SAGAR

Antarctic Research — 1984/85 programme

The Ross Dependency Research Committee (RDRC) invites proposals for research projects to be considered for inclusion in the 1984/85 NZ Antarctic Research Programme. Research proposals can cover any of the earth, life or atmospheric sciences and be directed to a better understanding of the unique Antarctic environment, its geological and geophysical structure, or those natural phenomena most suited to research from southern latitudes.

Research proposals can be either short or long term, and based at NZ's Antarctic stations or in the field, depending on the logistic support required. Proposals should include a detailed outline of past research in the topic, biographical notes on team members, an outline of anticipated work, and details of required logistic support.

Applications are reviewed by the biological, physical or earth sciences working groups of RDRC, and applicants will be informed of the status of their proposals in late December 1983.

An information package on research directions, available facilities and how to prepare a proposal is available along with a support information form from: The Secretary, RDRC, DSIR Head Office, Private Bag, Wellington.

Please note that applications close 31 August 1983.

Royal Spoonbill count 1980

The count of Royal Spoonbills in November/December 1980 produced a total of about 42 birds, 35 at Okarito and about 7 at Wairau Lagoons. It appears that during the count period the population was largely at the 'old' colony on the Waitangiroto, Westland. These birds left in early January 1981 and numbers apparently increased about this time at the Wairau Lagoons, with at least 4 pairs nesting there on 26/1/81 and 24 birds being present on 21/2/81.

Thanks are due to all those who have taken part in this survey, and in Royal Spoonbill counts over the years. It is hoped that all these reports can be collated and the results published in the near future.

R. N. HOLDAWAY