



# OSNZ news

No.35

June, 1985

Note: Deadline for the September issue will be 12th August.

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4, for the members of the Ornithological Society Of New Zealand (Inc.)

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

## AGM — Hamilton

The annual conference of the Society was held at Waikato University, Hamilton, from 24-26 May 1985. I will remember this year's conference for the splendid organisation achieved by Folkert Nieuwland and his team and for the many advantages of the 'live-in' arrangements for such weekends.

Council met on the Friday, although several members arrived late due to disruption of travel by the weather. As usual a long and varied agenda was tackled by an enthusiastic Council and this business took a full day to complete. Consideration of committee and scheme annual reports took most of the morning session. Most of these are published elsewhere in this newsletter. A special vote of thanks was passed to David Crockett for convening the Nest Record Scheme for so long and Council also thanked Hugh Robertson for taking on this role. Among the other business the Projects Assistance Fund warranted special attention. Funds were made available to the Totorore Expedition, a proposed visit to one of the Fiji islands by a NZ ornithologist and plans to get data from the Society's Nest Records, Beach Patrol and Moulting Recording Schemes onto an accessible computer file. The continuing need to increase our membership, particularly with younger people was discussed at Council and at every other meeting during the weekend. The appointment of Enfys Graham as RR for Canterbury was confirmed.

Regional Representatives met on Friday evening and again on Saturday morning. The high attendance at this meeting was an indication of the good health of the Society. The regional reports reflected a high level of membership support for the Society schemes and in some regions, for individual research. Ornithology in New Zealand depends to a large degree on the enthusiasm and competence of RRs and their ability to encourage members in their pursuits. Those not attending the RRs meeting were able to

visit the kiwi house and aviaries at Otorohanga which has become world renowned for its success in keeping and breeding native birds in captivity.

The afternoon session focussed on two of our endangered species. John Innes, Hugh Best and Dick Veitch spoke on management research on the North Island Kokako. Alan Saunders gave an excellent account of the present status of Brown Teal and efforts underway to save the remaining populations. Tony Roxburgh spoke about the Whangamarino Swamp and the fragile habitat that it provides for so much wildlife. Members welcomed the attendance at this session of people undertaking a Continuing Education course in ornithology. The opportunity to hear these addresses from the frontline of conservation in New Zealand was too good to be missed.

The annual dinner and preceding happy hour provided time to discuss not only birds but past events, plans for future trips and those half-baked theories on where Cattle Egrets breed or why *Notornis* is late. These informal sessions are a very real part of what makes ornithology so much fun.

The AGM was held on the campus in the Lady Goodfellow Chapel. The President briefly reviewed the Society's activities over the past year and paid tribute to the many voluntary workers who maintain the Society's functions. Special mention was made of our Treasurer, Doug Booth, who has kept our finances under control and has developed an efficient system of maintaining membership rolls. The Falla Memorial Award was awarded to Maida Barlow for her contributions to the Society and to ornithology in New Zealand. In her absence, the Secretary read an inspiring letter of acceptance. The A.T. Edgar Junior Member Award was presented to Phillip Batley of Wanganui. The President also paid tribute to Mr R. B. Johnson who has left Council after many years of service to the Society. Members' support of this tribute was shown by a standing ovation. A motion to increase the subscription was amended to a 25% increase for each class of membership. After consideration of the greatly increased costs of printing *Notornis* the amended motion was passed without dissent.

David Crockett was elected Vice President and Jenny Hawkins, Brian Gill and Ben Bell were elected to Council. Brian Bell was co-opted onto Council to take David's former position. The annual meeting then ended in plenty of time for members to resume their less formal activities.

On Sunday the programme continued with two practical sessions. Ben Bell gave instructions on methods of observing and recording moult. Hopefully, the Moulting Recording Scheme will receive more contributions as a result. Mike Imber, David Crockett and Chris Robertson provided some useful hints for beach patrollers in indentifying storm wrecked seabirds.

For the last session we returned to the frontline where Don Merton brought us up to date with Chatham Island Black Robin and Kakapo projects, and then related some of his birdy experiences on Mauritius. Tim Lovegrove had the final word, on recent transfer operations with the Saddleback.

PETER GAZE

## Nest Record Scheme — Report for year ending 30 April 1985

There are now 17,055 nest record cards covering 150 species. This year 61 members contributed 589 cards covering 71 species.

Substantial contributions to the scheme were received from Don Haddon of Christchurch with 85 cards of 31 species and Colin O'Donnell of Christchurch with 80 cards of 18 species. 76 cards of 18 species were received from Brian Chudleigh of Katikati. Bill Cash of Blenheim contributed 42 cards of 19 species, and Derek Onley of Charleston 37 cards of 10 species. Other significant contributions were received from: M. Dennison (11), J. G. Hamilton (17), M. Lane (16), N. Miller (13), F. Nieuwland (10), P. Reese (13), H. A. Robertson (13), K. V. Todd (12), M. & P. W. Twydale (11), I. D. Wilson (34).

105 Colonial cards were received covering the following 15 species: Gannet, Black Shag, Pied Shag, Little Black Shag, Little Shag,

King Shag, Spotted Shag, Royal Spoonbill, Pied Stilt, Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Black-fronted Tern, White-fronted Tern.

The Nest Record Scheme provides an ideal opportunity for individual members to contribute valuable information to a permanent store of facts that are available at anytime to members and research workers.

My sincere thanks to all contributors to the scheme and to those who have encouraged members to take part. To my wife Ruth my grateful thanks for most valuable assistance.

**List of contributors:** R. Balm, Ben D. Bell, D. Bettesworth, M. Blake, A. Bonniface, D. Buzan, W. E. Cash, B. Chudleigh, J. A. Cowie, P. Cozens, R. Crockett, D. Crouchley, M. Dennison, T. C. Dennison, B. Elliot, C. Elliot, J. Fennell, P. Fitzsimmons, I. A. Flux, D. G. Geddes, B. J. Gill, A. F. Gordon, G. Grant, D. Haddon, J. G. Hamilton, R. M. Hamilton, M. Lane, P. C. M. Latham, D. Lewitt, J. L. Lloyd, C. A. MacKinder, C. F. McRae, D. V. Merton, N. Miller, C. Miskelly, A. Munn, F. Murphy, F. Nieuwland, C. O'Donnell, D. J. Onley, S. Pitts, M. H. Powlesland, R. G. Powlesland, K. Priston, P. Reese, H. A. Robertson, A. S. Rowe, P. M. Sagar, I. W. Sangster, P. Schweigman, E. B. Spurr, B. M. Taylor, G. Taylor, M. J. Taylor, K. V. Todd, O. C. Torr, M. Twydale, P. W. Twydale, S. Walker, I. D. Wilson, P. Wilson.

**List of species contributed during 1984/85:** Little Blue Penguin 3, Southern Crested Grebe 9, Gannet 2, Black Shag 2, Pied Shag 3, Little Black Shag 1, Little Shag 3, King Shag 5, Spotted Shag 1, White-faced Heron 3, Royal Spoonbill 1, Canada Goose 4, Mute Swan 1, Black Swan 8, Paradise Shelduck 3, Grey Duck 2, Mallard 6, NZ Scaup 1, Harrier 3, NZ Falcon 1, Brown Quail 1, Californian Quail 2, Marsh Crane 1, Pukeko 23, Australian Coot 1, SIPO 5, Variable Oystercatcher 14, Chatham Island Oystercatcher 4, Fairy Tern 1, Spur-winged Plover 16, NZ Dotterel 2, Shore Plover 10, Wrybill 4, Black-fronted Dotterel 2, Banded Dotterel 11, Pied Stilt 14, Black Stilt 4, Black-backed Gull 28, Red-billed Gull 10, Black-billed Gull 17, Black-fronted Tern 16, Caspian Tern 12, White-fronted Tern 18, NZ Pigeon 2, Kaka 1, Red-crowned Parakeet 1, Kingfisher, South Island Rifleman 4, Skylark 10, Welcome Swallow 21, Hedge Sparrow 8, North Island Fernbird 2, South Island Fernbird 3, Brown Creeper 1, Grey Warbler 10, Chatham Island Warbler 3, North Island Fantail 7, Chatham Island Fantail 1, South Island Fantail 15, Yellow-breasted Tit 4, Chatham Island Tit 5, White-backed Magpie, Song Thrush 57, Blackbird 33, Silvereye 2, Chatham Island Tui 2, Yellowhammer 2, Chaffinch 12, Greenfinch 7, Goldfinch 45, House Sparrow 3, Starling 9.

AVID E. CROCKET, *Convenor*

## Beach Patrol Scheme — Preliminary Report 1984

In 1984 some 4295km of coast were patrolled (4559 in 1983) during 615 patrols (570 in 1983). 10,235 dead seabirds were found (5991 in 1983). The most notable feature of the 1984 results was the wreck of several species during August. Although more cards have been sent in since the following results were calculated, already the numbers of Kerguelen Petrels (483) and Blue Petrels (613) found are nearly double the number of each species found during the last major wreck, in 1981. Associated with these petrels were large numbers of Fairy Prions (2564), Antarctic Prions (182) and Thin-billed Prions (390). Other species to be found in greater numbers than usual in 1984 were White-headed Petrel (155), Black Petrel (39), Buller's Shearwater (310), Fluttering Shearwater (706), Hutton's Shearwater (73), White-faced Storm Petrel (44), Gannet (276), Pied Shag (37) and Black-backed Gull (420).

The following are provisional totals for each region of coast patrolled.

Coast	km	Birds
Auckland East	661	1485
Auckland West	1797	4920
Bay of Plenty	217	506
Canterbury North	144	243
Canterbury South	196	357
East Coast NI	148	265
North Coast SI	33	27
Outlying Is. (Chatham Is.)	27	63
Otago	54	36
Southland	24	45
Taranaki	85	277
Wairarapa	1	1
Westland	34	1
Wellington South	176	117
Wellington West	701	1892

The continuing success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 1984 was due to the efforts of many members and their friends who took part in patrols, and particularly to those people who organised regular patrols of beaches. This year was the first time the data have been entered into a computer. My thanks to Ross Pickard for writing the programmes that enabled the data to be efficiently entered and analysed, and to the Wildlife Service for use of their computer. Hopefully, it will only be a year or two before all the data from previous years (1939-83), which are present on some 10,000 cards, are entered into a computer so that summaries for a particular species or coast are readily available for members.

RALPH POWLESLAND, *Convenor*

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## Checklist Committee Report 1985

A good deal of material has now been prepared in the form of first drafts by Committee members. In view of this a request for funds to provide for typing was made to the Council, with the suggestion that the drafts be entered on the Auckland Museum's Xerox 821 word processor. This will enable Committee members' comments to be circulated for discussion and amendments agreed upon to be made without re-typing. The Committee is most grateful to Dr Brian Gill for the suggestion that this method be used, and to the Director of the Museum Mr G. S. Park for his permission to make use of the Museum's word processor. The OSNZ Council's grant of \$350 towards expenses of the word processor operator is much appreciated by the Committee.

It is hoped that authorities in various groups will be prepared also to examine drafts in addition to discussion by members of the Committee. We are grateful to Dr Murray Williams who has commented on and amended the Anseriformes section.

E. G. TURBOTT, *Convenor*

## SW Pacific Records Scheme — Annual Report 1985

Field notes received during 1984 all relate to Norfolk Island and a report based on Norfolk Island data received to March 1985 has now been prepared for publication.

Contributions to the scheme during 1984/85 were received from: H. Wakelin for November 1971, March 1974 & March 1976; T. Lovegrove for September 1982; J. L. & M. Moore for December 1984.

J. L. MOORE, *Recorder*

## Annual Report of the OSNZ Rare Birds Committee

A variety of rare birds were recorded during the 1984/85 year and two species, Ruff and Common Tern, were added to the New Zealand list. Some records are still being examined by the Committee but those records accepted during the past 12 months are listed below.

The Committee members have a wide range of experience covering most bird families. However, the Committee wishes to acknowledge the valuable help from various overseas authorities, especially Chris Corben (Australia), Jon Dunn (USA), Brian Finch (Papua New Guinea), and Peter Grant (UK).

Records accepted by the Committee during 1984/85 are:

**Moseley's Rockhopper Penguin** — A bird of this subspecies was found at Moa Point, Wellington and after being kept at Wellington Zoo was released at sea, Jan-Mar 1984 (P. J. Moores & D. M. Cunningham).

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** — A single bird seen at sea N of the Three Kings in March 1984 (A. McBride).

**Black-tailed Native Hen** — A bird stayed at Karamea from August until November 1984 (N. Stopforth & F. D. Richards).

**Marsh Sandpiper** — One at Hawkesbury Lagoon in February 1985 (P. Schweigman, R. F. Smith, K. C. Gager).

**Ruff** — One bird known to be at Lake Ellesmere from Dec 1984 until at least March 1985. Two birds were recorded on 14 Jan 1985 (K. C. Harrison, J. F. M. & J. S. Fennell, C. O'Donnell, K. Hughey).

**Snipe sp.** — A bird seen at Lake Tekapo on 31 December 1983 & 1 January 1984 could not be specifically identified, however, it was probably a Japanese Snipe (R. J. Pierce).

**Great Knot** — One bird was seen at the Manawatu Estuary in Nov 1983 (J. & M. Moore).

**Wilson's Phalarope** — Further to last year's record of a bird at Lake Ellesmere details were received confirming that two birds were actually present in Dec 1983 (K. C. Harrison).

**Long-tailed Skua** — One was seen at sea, just off the Three Kings, in March 1984 (A. McBride).

**White-winged Black Tern** — A bird in non-breeding plumage was photographed in Tauranga Harbour in January 1985, and stayed for several weeks (B. Chudleigh).

**Common Tern** — This species was added to the NZ list when one was seen and photographed at the Rangitaiki Rivermouth. It was not possible to confirm that the bird was of the Eastern race (P. C. M. Latham, B. Chudleigh, W. Hutton).

**Orange-fronted Parakeet** — One was seen in the Hawdon Valley, Arthur's Pass National Park in February 1984 (A. Read, P. McClelland).

**Oriental Cuckoo** — One was photographed at Tukurau, Golden Bay in December 1984 (W. R. L. Wilkins).

**Australian Tree Martin** — One was seen in the Eglinton Valley in October 1983 (K. & J. Morrison).

**Fairy Martin** — Three records from the north, Cape Reinga in Nov 1983, Leigh in Nov 1984 and Papakura in Jan 1985 (D. Riddell, K. J. Taylor, B. Brown).

JOHN FENNELL, *Secretary*

## Library Report 1985

I am pleased to be able to report that as a result of a suggestion by Dr Brian Gill, the library is being integrated with the Auckland Museum & Institute library, giving it a secure home for the future. This was started by moving the periodicals onto shelving provided by the Museum, and paid

for by them and the Society jointly. These are in the Periodicals Room, and we owe Ian Thwaites and his staff a hearty thanks for spending time to assist with this task.

Currently the books and reprints remain in their usual place and access by members is as usual.

Interloan borrowing has been constant but borrowing by members has been negligible, with only 16 items going out. However, it is hoped to have an updated library list available at the AGM and this may stimulate interest (see separate note regarding this list elsewhere in this issue — Ed.).

The journal circulation scheme continues to be popular, with 29 members seeing 31 journals and newsletters.

We are now receiving *Naika*, the newsletter from the Vanuatu Natural Science Society. However, Bird Study will no longer be available as it is being published separately by Blackwells now. Instead we shall be sent *Ringing and Migration*. It is also probable that *Auk* will be replaced by the *Florida State Museum Bulletin*.

This year 19 books, 1 tape and 25 other items were added to our collection, some of these were donated by B. D. Heather, L. B. McPherson, J. L. Moore, M. J. Taylor, G. A. Tunnicliffe and S. I. Anderson and we are grateful to all of these members.

A. J. GOODWIN, *Hon. Librarian*

## Grey Warbler on overhead wire

Near our home in Belmont, Lower Hutt, Grey Warblers are present in the bush and scrub of Speedys Stream, and they frequently visit nearby gardens, including our own. Recently I was surprised to observe a warbler fly from our garden and onto one of the overhead powerlines in the street. It remained there for about 30 seconds and broke into song briefly before flying across the street and into a ngaio tree. Warblers are so typically birds of cover that this sighting of one using an exposed perch such as a powerline is worth putting on record.

## Far North/Northland Beach Patrols — 1985

The dates for Far North/Northland beach patrols during the remainder of 1985 are as follows: 90 Mile Beach — 13 July, 17 August, 14 September, 12 October, 9 November, 21 December; Dargaville — 13 July, 10 August, 21 September, 19 October, 16 November, 7 December.

Members from other regions who may be visiting Far North/Northland at any of these times are most welcome to participate in these patrols.

Laurie Howell

## Taupo Summer Camp

Pencil in the OSNZ summer camp at Mission Bay, Lake Taupo for Saturday 11 January to Saturday 18 January 1986.

Good accommodation in peaceful and spacious surroundings is available; including some cabins for families. We hope to survey the entire shoreline of Lake Taupo, and of course poke into lots of other interesting Volcanic Plateau habitats. Any boats, from cabin cruisers to canoes will be valuable. Enquiries to John Innes, RR Volcanic Plateau. Full details will be included with the September issue of *Notornis*.

There is a rumour that this camp even has a train, did you know?

JOHN INNES

## Membership of OSNZ Committees

**Atlas:** Dr Peter Bull (Convenor), Peter Gaze, Barrie Heather, Chris Robertson

**Checklist:** Graham Turbott (Convenor), Sandy Bartle, Don Brathwaite, Dr Brian Gill, Dr Phil Millener, Dick Sibson.

**Christmas Cards:** Russell Thomas (Convenor), Chris Robertson.

**Rare Birds:** John Fennell (Secretary), Dr Ben Bell, Brian Bell, Barrie Heather, Paul Sagar, Dick Sibson.

The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees.

The conveners of the Society's permanent schemes are listed on the inside front cover of *Notornis*.

## A. T. Edgar Memorial Award for Junior Members

At the November 1984 Council meeting it was decided to endow the Junior award and name it in honour of the late Sandy (A. T.) Edgar.

Sandy had a long association with the Northland and Far North regions and was well known to members elsewhere as Secretary of the Society in the 1960's, and as recorder of many field study activities throughout NZ.

The association of the Junior Award with Sandy is most appropriate as it recognises his great support and interest in young ornithologists.

An endowment fund was established with a contribution from the Edgar family, and now members are invited to make a financial contribution to this fund by forwarding it to: Doug Booth, Hon. Treasurer, OSNZ, P.O. Box 35-337 Browns Bay, Auckland 10. Contributions should be marked A. T. Edgar Memorial Award.

D. E. CROCKETT