



# OSNZ news

No.51

JUNE, 1989

Note Deadline for the September issue  
will be 20th August, 1989.



50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
1939-1989

## The 50th Anniversary celebrations at Whangaparaoa

Society members migrated from all parts of the country and gathered at the Whangaparaoa Camp during the weekend of 2-5 June for the Annual Conference and AGM, and to celebrate the Society's 50th anniversary. To mark the occasion the Auckland-based organising committee provided us with a memorable weekend of activities.

Members began to gather at the Camp on Friday evening and after registering at the Conference Desk were shown the general location of the buildings where dining, social events and talks were to take place. It wasn't long before "Tom's Bar" was well patronised and this proved an excellent venue to track down friends and make new acquaintances.

All the talks on Saturday morning were about waders. Adrian Riegen started, with a well-illustrated review of the activities of

the Miranda Banders and proposals for future banding studies of migratory waders. Then Paul Sagar presented some of the results from the first 5 years of the national wader counts, with specific reference to the abundance and distribution of the most common arctic and resident breeding species. This was followed by Dick Veitch's examination of count trends arising from the long-term censuses of waders at the Firth of Thames and Manukau Harbour. By reference to the 3-roost counts at the Firth of Thames he also showed how the timing of counts is critical if they are to be comparable from year-to-year. Finally in this session, John Dowding reviewed the history of the endemic N.Z. Dotterel and reviewed the work done in previous studies before telling us about his current studies around Auckland and on Stewart Island.

Following lunch we reassembled for 2 further talks. Don Merton gave a brief review of events leading to the Society's 25th Anniversary Expeditions to the Kermadec Islands, then showed a movie of the 1966-67 expedition. Besides the volcanic events of 1964, most comment was excited by the appearances of the youthful Don Merton, David Crockett, and Dick Veitch! Following this Geoff Moon gave an illustrated account of how photography can be used in the study of birds. As we have come to expect, the slides were of a high standard.

### AGM

The Annual General Meeting convened at 4.00 pm, with acting President David Crockett in the chair. First, he read a message from the President, Beth Brown (see below). The meeting sent a greeting to Beth in appreciation of her efforts on behalf of the Society. As the Society celebrates its 50th year, Dr Peter Bull was called upon to say a few words about Prof. B. J. Marples, one of the main movers in the formation of the Society. It was moved and carried that the meeting convey its greetings to Prof. Marples on this anniversary occasion.

Tim Lovegrove then paid tribute to John Jenkins, a long-standing and active member of the Society, who died earlier

this year. John is known to many for his seabird observations and for his detailed papers of their marine distribution in our region.

### Annual Report

In his annual report, David Crockett paid tribute to the RRs and the work they do on the Society's behalf. He said the national network of ornithology is one of the great achievements of the Society and the high level of participation is evidenced by the large attendance at this weekend. However, David suggested that a further 500 members over the next 5 years were required to complete the coverage of the country. He made a plea for every member to promote OSNZ activities and ideals, so people will join out of interest.

Thanks were also extended to the convenors of the Society's schemes and a lot of others whose work contributed greatly to the betterment of OSNZ.

An outline of 2 new national projects to be initiated by the Society was given by Hugh Robertson (see below) - these are a census of the N.Z. Dotterel population and a study of the movements of Pied Stilts.

David Crockett praised the continuing high standard of *Notornis* and noted that the Society's journal has a high standing internationally. The meeting gave prolonged applause to Barrie Heather for his outstanding efforts as Editor of *Notornis*.

Next, Ben Bell reviewed developments in planning the 1990 IOC and the ICBP, TVNZ Film Festival, and the Birdpex Stamp Exhibition. Brian Gill also reported on progress with the 50th Anniversary Publication.

Finally, David Crockett noted that there were still tasks to be done within the Society, especially with respect to publicity.

### FALLA MEMORIAL AWARD

The announcement that Mr E. G. Turbott was awarded the Falla Memorial Award for 1989 was greeted with exceptional applause. The obvious surprise and delight of Mr Turbott on receiving the award was appreciated by the meeting. In his response, Mr Turbott said he owed a great debt to R.A. Falla for the encouragement he received when he was a young school teacher in Auckland.

A number of interesting statistics emerged from the analysis, such as that 581 members or friends have filed cards during the 39 years of the Scheme, almost 50% of the cards in the Scheme have been submitted by the 18 members who have recorded over 300 nests, and Don Hadden is the leading contributor with 753 cards. The number of cards submitted is not necessarily a good measure of the value of the contribution – this year, for instance, we received a very detailed card from Miss K. J. Twydale of Napier, for a Dunnock nest in which the clutch size, some laying times, incubation period, and fledging period were all recorded.

In 1988-1989, 43 members or friends contributed 669 Nest Record Cards covering 64 species. This brings the grand total to 20 086 cards of 136 species. A Black-winged Petrel nest found by Dr Ralph Powlesland on the Three Kings Islands was the first recorded in the Scheme. Dr Peter Bull contributed 146 cards of 8 species, mainly from a detailed examination of a horticultural block being developed by his family in the Horowhenua area – he is interested to see how the species composition changes with time. Members from the Canterbury region again contributed the bulk of the remaining cards: Peter Reese recorded 83 nests of 13 species, Don Hadden 74 nests of 25 species, Andrew Crossland 56 nests of 18 species, and also Paul Sagar (41), Peter Howden (24), Jack Cowie (21), Colin O'Donnell (19), Peter Dilks (13), and George Watola (10). Major contributors from other regions included Derek Onley (53), Ralph Powlesland (18), Michael & David Bell (14), Hugh Robertson (13, including 10 with Barrie Heather), Phil Garside (11), Bill Cash (10), and Stewart Lauder (10).

Twenty six colonial nest record cards were included in the 669 cards noted earlier; these covered 9 species: Royal Spoonbill, Canada Goose, Black Swan, Pied Stilt, Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black-billed Gull, White-fronted Tern, and Caspian Tern.

This year I had requests from OSNZ members for information on nests of: NZ Falcon, Subantarctic Snipe, Kaka, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, and Goldfinch. The cards were either examined in situ for large databases, or photocopied where few cards existed for the species.

My thanks go to all of the contributors to the Nest Record Scheme this year, whether they contributed one or many cards.

**List of contributors:** A. J. Beauchamp, D. & M. Bell, Bell family, M. Bowron, P. C. Bull, W. F. Cash, C. R. B. Coleman, J. A. Cowie, A. Crossland, T. C. Dennison, P. Dilks, B. Elliott, P. Garside, G. A. Grant, R. & G. P. Guest, D. W. Hadden, B. D. Heather, P. J. Howden, P.

Langlands, S. Lauder, R. McAuliffe, C. F. J. O'Donnell, C. C., R. C. & R. D. Ogle, D. J. Onley, R. J. Pierce, R. G. Powlesland, P. J. Reese, W. Ringer, H. A. Robertson, P. M. Sagar, C. E. Scadden, P. Schweigman, C. Searle, M. J. Taylor, K. J., M. & P. W. Twydale, G. Watola, and R. Wheeler.

**List of species recorded during 1988-89:** Yellow-eyed Penguin 10, Little Blue Penguin 1, Crested Grebe 1, Black-winged Petrel 1, Pied Shag 1, Little Shag 1, White-faced Heron 1, Royal Spoonbill 1, Canada Goose 7, Black Swan 3, Paradise Shelduck 2, Mallard 6, Grey Duck 3, Banded Rail 1, Pukeko 2, Coot 2, S.I. Pied Oystercatcher 18, Variable Oystercatcher 17, Spur-winged Plover 19, N.Z. Dotterel 3, Banded Dotterel 20, Black-fronted Dotterel 3, Wrybill 1, Pied Stilt 20, Black-backed Gull 33, Red-billed Gull 2, Black-billed Gull 3, Black-fronted Tern 21, Caspian Tern 5, Antarctic Tern 34, Fairy Tern 1, White-fronted Tern 4, N.Z. Pigeon 9, Rock Dove 1, Kaka 1, Red-crowned Parakeet 1, Shining Cuckoo 2, Long-tailed Cuckoo 2, Morepork 1, Kingfisher 3, Rifleman 2, Skylark 7, Welcome Swallow 32, Pipit 1, Dunnock 11, Fernbird 1, Yellowhead 2, Grey Warbler 4, Fantail 4, Tomtit 2, Robin 1, Song Thrush 110, Blackbird 106, Silvereye 20, Tui 3, Yellowhammer 5, Cirl Bunting 1, Chaffinch 13, Greenfinch 23, Goldfinch 17, Redpoll 5, House Sparrow 15, Starling 16, Myna 1.

HUGH ROBERTSON, *Convenor*

## Annual Report of the Rare Birds Committee 1988-89

Rob Guest took over the position of Secretary of the Rare Birds Committee in October 1988 from Brian Bell, who was acting in a temporary capacity following the resignation of Mike Imber.

The Committee consists of the Secretary, 6 members and the President of OSNZ (during this period these duties have been carried out by the acting President). All of the Committee have been circulated with records for review and although one member is currently in Britain for a year this has been no problem as replies to date have been received within a reasonable time.

In the past year 31 records were received. One of these is a series of sightings (commic terns). Of these records:

- \* 2 have been referred back to the observers with requests for further information;
- \* 1 was not formally considered because of the likelihood of it being an escapee and not truly wild or feral (Cape Barren Goose);
- \* 4 were not accepted;
- \* 1 remains in suspense as a probable sighting;
- \* 1 not resolved the previous year was accepted (Bridled Tern);

\* 15 were accepted (see below);

\* 7 are still circulating.

The following records were accepted by the Committee.

**Juan Fernandez Petrel** – 2 birds seen and heard on South East Island, Chathams (J. A. West).

**New Caledonian Petrel** – 1 recovered alive under a truck in Dunedin (D. Hawke).

**Tahiti Petrel** – 3 sightings at sea off the Bay of Plenty coast (G. S. Clark).

**White-tailed Tropic Bird** – 1 found alive in a Ruakaka garden during Cyclone Delilah (R. Parrish).

**Nankeen Night Heron** – 1 in the upper Taieri (Monty Wright).

**Chestnut-breasted Shelduck** – 2 on the Hokitika riverbed at Arthurstown in January 1973. This now becomes the first N.Z. record of this species (Peter Grant).

**Oriental Dotterel** – sightings at the Invercargill Estuary and Waituna, Southland (Maida Barlow & Roger Sutton).

**Snipe sp.** (Gallinago) – 1 at the Cass River, Lake Tekapo (Peter Langlands).

**Oriental Pratincole** – 1 on Ruapuke Island, Foveaux Strait (Maida Barlow).

**Long-tailed Skua** – 1 found dead on Otaki Beach (Ralph Powlesland).

**Common Tern** – 1 at the mouth of the Tarawera River (P. Latham).

**Bridled Tern** – 1 found dead on Brighton Beach, Christchurch. A first record for N.Z. (Peter Langlands).

**White Tern** – 1 found dead at Pekapeka Beach, Wellington West Coast (Ralph Powlesland).

**Spine-tailed Swift** – 1 found dead on Te Horo Beach (Ralph Powlesland).

One record was placed on the Suspense List; that of a Bush Wren at the Sabine River, Nelson Lakes National Park (Christopher Bycroft). It is hoped that a field party can spend time in this area during early December this year.

Earlier this year a standard format for recording the comments of committee members was adopted and this has improved the ability to file reports.

There are some problems with local rarities. There is much variation throughout the country in procedures. This problem will be tackled in the coming year so as to maintain knowledge of these uncommon species and to encourage the further development of reporting skills among members.

ROB GUEST & BRIAN BELL

## Report of the Banding Liaison Officer

During the past year, at the invitation of the Banding Office, I have commented on 8 applications for new banding permits;