

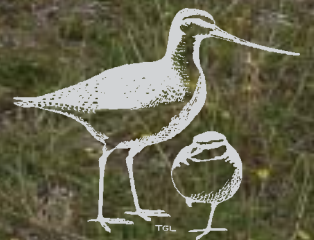
MIRANDA NEWS

Naturalists' Trust

February 2007 Issue 64



Seabird Migration
A Trip to North-west Australia
The Field Course



February 2007 Issue 64

Situated on the Firth of Thames between Kaiua and the Miranda Hot Pools, the Miranda Shorebird Centre provides a base for birders, right where the birds are. Drop in to investigate, or come and stay a night or two. The Centre has three bunkrooms for hire, plus two self-contained flats. For rates see Back Page. The best time to see the birds is two to three hours either side of high tide. The Miranda high tide is 30 minutes before the Auckland (Waitemata) tide.

The Newsletter of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust is published four times per year to keep members in touch, and to bring news of events at the Miranda Shorebird Centre and along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission.

Front Cover: From left to right Peter Clark, Helen Clark, Keith Woodley, Adrian Riegen and Gillian Vaughan, see page 4 for details

Back Cover Top: A Tui feeding on *Puya* flowers Photo David Medway see page 8 for story

Bottom: A Weka and chicks at Kawakawa Bay, the summer appears to have gone well for our local Weka. The next census is likely to be in March or April, contact Gillian Vaughan (details back cover) if you'd like to know when and where.

March 11th. NOT ON YOUR CALANDER - but it should be!

March 11, 10 am High Tide 1240 Anyone visiting the centre over the last year may have seen the book *Shorebirds: a behavioural ecology* on sale in our shop. The stunning images in that book are the work of Jan van de Kam, one of the world's leading wader photographers. Jan will be at Miranda to make a presentation featuring his superb images of waders and their world. An opportunity not to be missed.

2 pm Mistletoe Assistance. The native mistletoe has become established in two places just inside the gate of the shorebird centre. The host plants are now being threatened by convolvulus, and we are seeking the assistance of any willing people to help do some weeding. So it could be a full day out: great bird images, wader watching at high tide, and mistletoe release in the afternoon. Contact the centre if you are able to help.

And don't forget that Autumn Migration Day is early this year. See you on February 25th!

Upcoming Events

February 25 10:00
Autumn Migration Day
Speaker Keith Thompson,
Wetlands of the Firth of Thames
Area.

NOT ON YOUR CALANDER

March 11, 10 am
Jan van de Kam will be at
Miranda to make a presentation
featuring his superb images of
waders and their world.

March 11, 2 pm
Mistletoe Assistance. Help keep
the convolvulus under control.

May 20 10:30am
Annual General Meeting
The tide is at 9:30 so come early
for birding.

June 10
OSNZ Firth of Thames Census
Meet at noon at the Shorebird
Centre, All welcome, contact the
Centre for details.

Change of Date: please note the
Wader ID workshop scheduled
for 27-28 October has been
rescheduled for 10-11 Novem-
ber.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

High Honours:

In the New Year's Honours list the Deputy Chairman of the Trust Adrian Riegen was appointed as a member of the NZ Order of Merit (MNZM). This award is in recognition of the work that Adrian has undertaken and is continuing to undertake in the study of the migration of Godwit and Red Knot throughout their flyways. Adrian and his work will be well known to members of the Trust through the NZ Wader study group and as a regular tutor at field courses and other activities.

This is indeed an honour for not only Adrian but also the work that the Trust is undertaking under his guidance in



advocating for the migratory shorebirds.

On a similar topic in the Queens Birthday Honours list in the middle of 2006 Past Secretary Gwenda Pulham was awarded a Queens Service Medal (QSM). This was to recognise Gwenda's efforts in the raising of awareness on the plight of the N Z Fairy Tern whose population is still only



approximately 40 birds. Gwenda has been a tireless advocate for these birds for many years and has been instrumental in the development of the recovery plan which has now seen a slight increase in numbers in recent years.

New Years Eve Party:

The advised New Years Eve party took place at the Shorebird Centre, however it was a very low key event. The party consisted of Stuart and Alison Chambers and Lynne and myself. While we were small in numbers we were big in ideas and there was a lively discussion on future options for the Trust and I am sure you will hear much more about the plans that were discussed that evening in the future.

I would suggest in future years that if you do not want Stuart and I to develop wild ideas then it may be a good idea to attend and temper our enthusiasm.

Chinese Programme:

In my last report I indicated that we would again be hosting Chinese Reserve Managers during this summer period. Since that report was written however we have heard that the Chinese are not sending anyone this year due to budget constraints.

However it is still intended that a group from Miranda will travel to China later in the year to continue the census work that has been running for the past 3 years and also undertake further bird catching and banding workshops.

The programme and activities are still in the formative stages and more details will be available soon.

Campervans:

For some time the Trust has been concerned at the buildup of campervans overnighing on the area known as "Rays Rest". While their location on that part of the foreshore is of minimal concern the

encroachment onto the area near the Taramaire stream mouth is more critical. This is an important high tide roost and is prone to disturbance.

We have made submissions to the Franklin District Council that there should be no campervans or overnight stays in the area to the east of the fence angle but there has been no action apart from a resolution to support that proposal. The Trust has therefore commenced discussions with the Campervan Association of N Z and we may undertake some signage and physical barriers to ensure that people are made aware of the importance of the roost.

The high use of this area was highlighted over the Christmas period when at times there were in excess of 70 campervans along the short portion of coast line and up to 20 in the area that we believe should be restricted. There was even a tent with guide stays tied to the signs indicating the importance of the area.

Vehicle Break Ins:

The issue of break in of cars parked at the lime works gate has caused us concern over years. There will be none for a long period of time and then suddenly several in a close span and the infrequent nature of them make it difficult to fathom a solution.

There was one devastating event just prior to Christmas when overseas tourists who had spent an extensive time in Australia and then in New Zealand had their car vandalised and all their belongings taken on the day before they were due to fly back to England.

While we have very little control over that type of activity those of us who are directly involved feel a sense of responsibility even though we are probably powerless to prevent the criminal activity.

However we are having more signs made for the gateway to alert visitors to the dangers of the area and I think all of us can alert people arriving at the gate of the dangers and suggest that they either leave their valuables or their car at the Centre and walk along the trail.

We are also investigating the options of cameras but as the events are so far apart this may not be a viable option.

Predator Control:

The predator control programme that was developed by Phil Batley and Dr Perrot has been established and is now ongoing. The bulk of the maintenance of the trap line is being undertaken by Jenni Hensley and we thank her for her efforts on this unpleasant task.

While the catch of predators has not been high there has been enough to indicate that there is some pressure on the roosting birds and this is being reduced by the programme.

Ramsar Listing:

Those of you who are observant would know that March 2007 will mark the 10th anniversary of the listing of the Miranda Ramsar site. The listing of this site has had little tangible benefits as the Department of Conservation struggles to deal with this site that straddles two conservancies and a number of Territorial and Regional Council boundaries.

However as a public awareness tool it has value, particularly as it is now more promoted than it was in the earlier days.

To celebrate the anniversary it is hoped to obtain a relevant speaker for the Welcome to the birds open day to assist us to use the event to raise further awareness of the Ramsar convention.

Volunteers At Centre:

The Trust Council has been aware for some time that we are not making the best use of volunteers at the Centre, mainly because we do not have a well developed volunteer programme.

Kathy Barrow who has been our coordinator has been distracted in recent times because of the illness of her husband and this has also caused some difficulties.

While we have Keith working at least 5 days a week and Jenny working part time there has been a tendency to assume that volunteers are only needed to give either one or the other a break. However in my opinion there would be much merit in having volunteers at the Centre at the same time as either Keith or Jenni are working to ease the work load and also provide for the possibility that one of them can be on the shore banks during the high tide periods greatly increasing the advocacy role. Having a volunteer working alongside the duty manager would also enable the volunteers to gain more from their opportunity.

One avenue that has not been explored is whether volunteers would be prepared to set aside say a day or a

Prime Ministers Visit

Following my invitation sent in the middle of last year I received advice at short notice that the Prime Minister wished to visit the centre on the 3rd of February. Unfortunately this coincided with a family wedding and I had to delegate the meeting and greeting to Adrian, Keith, Gillian and Glenice, but they did an excellent job of impressing her with the work that we are doing at the centre.

Unfortunately she has still not got the hang of running the country, to best suit the tide cycles, and her visit coincided with a half tide. Reasonable views were obtained through telescopes, but we have invited her to make a third visit, this time arranging her other activities around the high tide period. We are however heartened by her visit and intend to foster her interest.

Photo Glenice Bullen



weekend a month on a regular basis or even the possibility of a day a week, particularly through the summer months.

Because of Kathy's circumstances Jenni is assisting her in organising the volunteers at the present time. If there are people who wish to volunteer or have thoughts about how we can better manage the volunteer programme they should let either Jenny or myself know so that we can gain the most benefits.

Andrew Crowe Donation:

Most of you will be well aware of the Andrew Crowe series of nature books. Andrew lives on the Coromandel Peninsula and we sell many of his books through the bookshop at the Centre.

Recently Andrew provided a donation which was to enable the Trust to sponsor young people to the Dotterel training course, the wader identification course and or the field course. The ability for the Trust to subsidise some attendees means that we were able to include people who would not have the ability to attend on a normal full fare paying basis.

We thank Andrew for this investment in the future and I would urge people to purchase Andrew's books on a reciprocal basis.

Field Course:

Elsewhere in this newsletter there will be a full summary of the January field course which was another extremely successful event. I was only able to attend on the one day but even during that day I was able to gain an insight into the enthusiasm that was developed by the course attendees and I have heard from several of the tutors that they were heartened by the interest shown.

The benefits of a residential field study course such as that run at Miranda relies very heavily on the organisation and the tutors available.

Once again Eila Lawton organised a very full and interesting programme

and all of the logistics involved in having food and the accommodation available for all of the attendees. I would like to express my personal thanks and that on behalf of the Trust for the work that Eila has put into this current field course. I know that Eila would also wish me to thank the numerous tutors who were involved in providing the interesting sessions throughout the course. The Trust is only able to run such a successful course because the tutors are volunteering their time and that enables the fees to be kept at a bare minimum. I therefore wish to publicly thank all of those people who were involved in assisting Eila in this very successful event and hope that it is possible to run future similar courses.

Coming Activities:

The newsletter and the programme of events that was sent with the previous newsletter shows that we have an interesting series of opportunities throughout this year to participate and be informed. I would urge as many of you as possible to attend these events as there is nothing worse than

organising an interesting speaker and have a very small audience.

As always if members have any thoughts on future developments of the Trust or improvements at the Centre do not hesitate to contact me.

STOP PRESS

As I was preparing to send this rambling to Gillian (on 1st Feb), I have just been advised that a delegation of nine high ranking Chinese officials from Yalu Jiang, and other municipalities will be visiting Miranda near the end of March. As more details come to hand we will advise members as we need to impress them of our hospitality, and our facilities. I will also need a delegated drinker to stand in for me, as Gillian will have her hands full trying to compete with one of the delegates.!!!

Some of these people are the movers and shakers in the part of China where we have been active, while others are the on ground workers, so try to meet them while they are here.

David Lawrie
Chairman

**DON'T FORGET THE NEW EVENT ON THE
CALANDER MARCH 11, JAN VAN DER KAM
SEE PAGE 2 FOR DETAILS**

Websites to check out

You can find out details the on Sooty Shearwater migration at www.toppcensus.org, while you are there you can find out what other tagged species, like elephant seals or sea turtles are doing.

www.planetark.com is a good site for daily environmental stories from all around the world, new information is available daily.

The Migration Research foundation at www.migrationresearch.org is an interesting north American based site which looks this year looks at the migration of short Eared Owls and Peregrine Falcons.

www.groms.de is the Global Register of Migratory Species. Want to find out of stilts in other parts of the world are migratory? This is a useful reference for basic species information

THE EXPEDITION

North-West Australia

If a good holiday is one that takes your mind off all those home-based worries, then I had the perfect one in November 2006. When you spend three weeks with the Australasian Wader Studies Group's North West Australia expedition, your mind is totally focussed, from around 5.00 am to when you fall into bed. On birds. Catching them, banding them, flagging them, measuring them, admiring them, identifying them, or preparing for doing one or all of these things. There is just time for the odd thought about food, for asking Phil (the one with the firefighter's weather gizmo) how hot and sticky it is today, and for trying to remember if you had filled in the cold beer list.

I joined the Wader and Tern Study Expedition, the 26th since 1981, in Broome. The expedition's principal leader is, as ever, Dr Clive Minton, the doyen of cannon netting in this hemisphere.

The first days of the expedition are spent at the Broome Bird Observatory on the shores of Roebuck Bay. Meals and meetings take place in the Shade House. In daylight, you keep your

binoculars by your side, on the lookout for the birds and wallabies that come to drink at the strategically placed watering spots. At night, proceedings are frequently drowned by the suddenly raucous tree frogs in the rafters. Sauntering between your room and shade house or shower rooms in the starlight can be enlivened by the call that Kenneth the King Brown Snake is about. Why he has to choose the women's showers to curl up in, I don't know, but the sight of expedition co-leader Roz Jessop striding purposefully with a broom in hand was comforting to those with less snaky experience. Birds and reptiles were of equal interest to many at the BBO.

Most of the Broome cannon netting was carried out quite close to the Observatory, with occasional forays further north. The orange-red soils and rocks of the Pindan (the aboriginal name for the wider area) produce a brilliant shorescape. Rocky formations break much of the vivid reddish sands into bays hospitable to waders. An early morning walk over tide-washed sand covered in reptile and bird tracks gave me fresh eyes for the intricate nature of many aboriginal paintings.

We also made trips inland to Lake Eda and Taylors Lagoon to mist and cannon net, even once just to birdwatch! Australian and Oriental Pratincoles, finally focussing my scope on that lone Long-toed Stint, the intricate tracery of the Green Pygmy Geese's plumage, bustards displaying - these stay in my memory from that visit.

For ten days of the expedition we camped several hours' drive further south, on the 100 million acre Anna Plains Station, adjacent to 80 Mile Beach. After my trip north (see below), it was no longer a surprise to find lush green growth where water was available around the homestead, but it was a surprise to find that the gardener responsible for this bounty (including as many mangoes as we could collect from the ground) hailed from Kaiaua, just north of our own Shorebird Centre!

Each day we went down to the shoreline in the expeditions' fleet of four-wheeled vehicles. Our leaders chose a different section of the endless beach, using their years' of experience to read the signs hidden to many of us, deciding where which waders were likely to roost before the incoming tide. Then all haste to set the nets, yet again grinding down what remains of fingernails to camouflage the nets with sand. Then Clive and his selected ones take refuge in the equally rapidly erected hide/command post, while the rest of us prepare to re-enact *High Noon* in SUVs. We load into the vehicles, split north and south and drive several kilometres. Then, in tense radio communication (or not, according to battery strength), we turn and begin the task of twinkling the waders into the catching area.

Imagine, if you will, at least four vehicles abreast, each line creeping in turn along the beach. Finally "3,2,1, fire!" and it's drive like crazy to the nets, especially if they have fired into the rising tide. Leap out, grab the covering



Shorebirds caught in North-west Australia are marked with yellow flags. They are seen throughout the flyway giving information on the migration routes taken by each species. This Red Knot was seen at the Karaka shellbanks on the Manakau Harbour. Photo Ian Southey

material, perhaps kneel to form human forklifts to move nets and birds up the beach and clear of the water. Birds covered to quieten; release and carry to the keeping cages. Erect shade cloth above cages and processing areas. Relax, take a much-needed drink of water and join a processing team. What new species today?

It's eyes down to the birds in hand most of the time, but someone must always keep an eye out for the many different raptors that seem to know when there is an easy meal around (Birds are then held till the "all clear"). Several times elegant frigatebirds soar above us. On the very hottest of days - temperatures were frequently in the mid-40s - odd birds came down from the grasslands to cool off in the wet sand, frequently taking refuge under the vehicles. Crimson Chat and Horsfield's Cuckoo were two of our heat-driven visitors.

We also returned to the beach to mist net along the wave edge at night, processing the birds by lamp light. Home by moonlight, searching for the tracks of egg-laying turtle, returning another night to watch one dig a square hole and drop its eggs.

Spare time (just a little!) was spent birding amongst the Brahmin cattle around the boreholes or searching grassland for Stubble Quail, an eye always flicking upwards for yet another different raptor. Tawny Frogmouths nesting in the shade trees attracted much attention, as did the vagrant Arctic Warbler that took up residence in bushes right beside our tents. Never can a rare bird record have been so well documented!

Over the years the Expedition has built up an impressive data base that has been invaluable in understanding migration patterns, the demography of migratory waders, etc. The Expedition now concentrates on establishing annual breeding productivity, by estimating juvenile percentages of the main target species. Analysis of 'our' data suggests that 2006 was an average to poor breeding year for most of the species studied.

This year a total of 4001 birds were caught, around 1000 more than on other three-week-long recent expeditions. There were 3795 waders (31 species), 182 terns (8 species), 23 ducks and a gull. In addition, 213 passerines (of 13 species) were mist-netted in two "leisure time" sessions at the Anna Plains Hot Bore Pool. The biggest catch was 831; the most varied included 13 species. All birds were processed and released within the scheduled 'safe' 4 hour period.

The safe handling of such numbers of birds was to some extent due to the larger than usual party size. There were 32 of us, from seven countries. The mix of nationalities was good - 4 Thai, 1 Chinese, 1 Japanese, 5 British, 1 American, 3 Kiwis and 17 Australians. Apart from the Thai and Japanese food nights (NZ's most memorable contribution was probably the butchering and cooking of a deliciously tender and tasty wallaby stew), we also had rapid details from our Chinese colleague on every black and white flagged Chongming Dongtan bird. This underlined the relevance of what we were doing. There were 10 recoveries of internationally flagged birds - 8 from China and 2 from Japan. I believe the two Greenshank records, one from Japan, one from China, are the first real evidence of this species' migration route.

International participation is relevant in other ways too. The Thai contingent came to learn about cannon-netting so that they can use this technique there for catching water birds and waders for testing for Avian Influenza. They made such excellent progress that they are now constructing their first net in Thailand and hope to be catching there in only a few weeks (late January 2007).

I was glad that I had elected to drive up to Broome with other members of the expedition. Those 5000kms were long and hot, but as well as arriving to some degree acclimatised (or *acclimated* as our occasionally mystifying American companion had it), I saw so many new birds. I did start with a very low Australian list and two of the party



Eila Lawton photo Keith Woodley

came very well prepared. "There should be a Tawny Frogmouth in this tree." (Tick.) "If we stay in this motor camp, there will be a Red Goshawk nesting" (Tick, plus watching the young fledge.) Other sightings were more spontaneous, due usually to keen eyes and a readiness to scream to a halt. Highlights were watching some 100 Gouldian Finches in dry grass one evening and the sight of several brown trees turning vivid green with thousands of Budgerigar 'leaves'. I soon learned to look for water, whether a remnant in a drying creekbed or a sprinkler in some tiny outback community. Then the browns and reds of the Centre were electrified with blues, greens and reds.

I'll remember Broilgas dancing, budgie-leaved trees, little Red-capped Plovers, the red-orange soils of the pindan, turtle tracks on the endless sands of 80 Mile Beach. Australia certainly has an impact on all your senses. Such vivid colour, a racket of bird sound that makes me mourn anew for our own silent forest. Fresh mangoes, and wallaby stew. And free dermabrasion - there was *always* sand in the sunblock.

Eila Lawton

The next expedition is 10th November - 1 December 2007. If you are interested, contact Dr Rosalind Jessop, RMB 4009 Cowes, Victoria, 3922, Australia. moonbird@waterfront.net.au. It's best to stay the full three weeks, but some expedition members did leave early. Expedition costs were around \$A1400. There will probably be vehicles making the overland trip from Victoria again. Shared expenses made this a reasonably cheap travel option.

I acknowledge the use of data from the NWA 2006 Report.

Another exotic nectar source for New Zealand birds

With around 185 species, *Puya* is one of the largest genera in the Pineapple Family, Bromeliaceae. Most *Puya* species are concentrated along the Andes mountain range of South America, some at altitudes up to nearly 5000 metres. Generally they are found in arid places and gravelly soil. Unlike most of the bromeliads, the species of *Puya* are strictly terrestrial.

Puya alpestris is one of the southernmost species of *Puya*. This plant has erect or widely spreading rosettes of linear leaves with coarse marginal spines that tend to tear rather than scratch. These spines are presumed to be a defence against browsing animals. The waxy looking, funnel-shaped flowers that appear in summer are borne on stems up to two metres long. The flowers are an unusual shade of deep metallic blue-green, and have bright orange pollen on the tips of their stamens. The flowers produce copious quantities of nectar.

Puya alpestris is widely grown away from its natural habitat, including in some parks and specialised gardens in New Zealand. A group of these plants is growing in Brooklands Park in central New Plymouth. The flowers on most had finished by the time I began my observations at them on 29 January 2005, but two stems still bore a lot of fresh-looking flowers. All of the flowers had finished by 17 February.

I saw what was probably the same Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*) each time feeding at many of the *Puya* flowers on four occasions between 30 January and 6 February. When feeding, the Tui stood on sterile portions of the flower stems, and poked its head into immediately adjacent flowers (see photo). This is the first time I have seen Tui feeding at *Puya alpestris* flowers. Apparently, Tui feed regularly at *Puya alpestris* flowers in a specialised garden near Wanganui whenever the flowers of that plant are available there, and Tui may well do so in other localities where these plants are growing.

I also saw Mynahs (*Acridotheres tristis*) and House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) feeding regularly, but separately, at the *Puya* flowers. For example, on 6 February I saw one or two Mynahs feeding at the flowers on six occasions, and one or two House Sparrows (both male and female) feeding at the flowers on twelve occasions during the two hours I had the plants under observation. There is no doubt that the Mynahs and House Sparrows were obtaining nectar from the *Puya* flowers. They, like the Tui, stood on sterile portions of the flower stems, and poked their head into immediately adjacent flowers. On one occasion, a Mynah had very obvious orange pollen over the whole of its forehead and around the gape area. At least one House Sparrow had some faint orangish pollen on its forehead, but the

pollen was nowhere near as obvious on the House Sparrow as it was on the darker feathers of the Mynah's forehead. The *Puya* flowers, which were the only ones in the area with orange pollen, were the only flowers at which I saw Mynahs and House Sparrows feeding during the period of my observations.

I did not see any other birds feed at the *Puya* flowers. At least two Song Thrushes (*Turdus philomelos*) and up to five Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) fed regularly on lawn close to the *Puya* plants, but I never saw any of them go near the *Puya* flowers. Bellbirds (*Anthornis melanura*) have been recorded feeding at the flowers of *Puya alpestris* in the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust garden near New Plymouth (Medway *The birds of Pukeiti*, 2006), but I am not aware of any previously-published records of Tui, House Sparrows or Mynahs feeding on the nectar of that plant. It is not surprising that House Sparrows should seek nectar from *Puya alpestris* flowers, because they are known to feed on nectar from other flowers including those of flax (*Phormium tenax*), Pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) and Kowhai (*Sophora* spp.). The only nectar Mynahs are recorded in the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic birds* (Volume 7B, 2006) as eating in New Zealand is that of flax (*Phormium* spp.), but I suspect they take nectar more widely than that.

David Medway
see photo back page

Quaffing notes for birdwatchers

Labels are there to attract. After a week at the Shorebird Centre, my eye pulls me towards certain beverages.

Top of the list is clearly the Miranda winery – this is actually made in south eastern Australia, folks, but I am sure our centre manager could still be persuaded to autograph a label.

Banrock Station always has a place in my collection – any winery that actively supports wetlands, including some across this side of the ditch, has a place on my list. Should we be campaigning for the time when the Banrock Reserve will mean a day out rather than a night in to New Zealanders?

Promising a full-bodied warm red is the Red Knot label, yet another Australian product. Get this one before it leaves?

But what can a patriotic kiwi birdwatcher drink with a clear 'Buy New Zealand made' conscience? I look forward to your suggestions, but at the moment I have only one answer. Yeah, right, it's that beer again!

Eila Lawton

Q & A

Why are female godwits bigger than the males?

In most monogamous shorebird species, the female is larger than the male. This is certainly true of Bar-tailed Godwit where males are considerably smaller with shorter bills. One theory suggests this is because species such as godwit invest a lot of time and energy in one clutch of eggs. In migrating to and from the tundra they do not usually have time to lay a second clutch if the first one fails. Therefore if bigger eggs are laid the chicks begin life bigger and with better chances of survival. Bigger females are needed to make and lay these bigger eggs. In addition it appears the smaller more compact size of the male also has aerodynamic advantages when making his display flights above the tundra.

As for bill length, there too there are advantages. The longer-billed female godwit can maximise feeding opportunities by finding food at deeper levels in the mud flats. The shorter-billed males may feed on slightly different prey, minimising competition.

Keith Woodley

BOOK REVIEW

Extinct Birds of New Zealand

A. Tennyson and P. Martinson, 2006 Te Papa Press \$65.00

The last plate in the Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand could be viewed as one for the overly optimistic twitcher. It features five species that became extinct in the 20th Century. There it sits at the end of the guide – a tantalizing glimpse of what

could have been for the modern visiting birdwatcher. This new book broadens the picture dramatically by covering 58 species that became extinct since humans arrived in New Zealand.

Text by Alan Tennyson, Curator of Fossil Vertebrates at Te Papa, accompanies superb plates by Paul Martinson. For the latter it is a truly mammoth achievement.

While only 58 plates appear in the book, well over a hundred were actually completed. Some were discarded in favour of better ones, others for different reasons. For instance the New Zealand Storm Petrel was ready for inclusion until it was rediscovered on 1 January 2003 off Whitianga. But each plate is the result of hours of painstaking work – the total project consuming three years.

An earlier volume, *New Zealand's Extinct Birds* by Brian Gill (from Auckland



Museum) and Paul Martinson which appeared in 1991 was groundbreaking in its day. But since then much more has been learnt about our extinct fauna and the artist has become more accomplished.

Each plate sits opposite succinct text explaining what is known about the

likely ecology of each species, as well as something of its taxonomic history. A useful and very accessible chart across the bottom of each page lists distribution, time of extinction, primary causes of extinction, weight, meaning of its scientific name, numbers of specimens known, and identification of other fauna and flora species occurring in each plate. For each extinct species is shown in its likely habitat which often features plants, birds and invertebrates that are still with us. Thus extremely unfamiliar birds appear in very familiar places. In addition to this disorientation the reader can be left with a bundle of other reactions – from depressing to intriguing to enthralling.

A book then that is up to date, scholarly and informative, as well as beautiful to look at. Indispensable in fact.

Keith Woodley

SHINING CUCKOO AT MIRANDA

Walking through the avenue of flowering fennel at Access Bay, John and I were surprised to encounter a Shining Cuckoo clinging to a tall fennel stem. It did not call but was closely attended by six or seven Silvereyes and a Greenfinch, as it flew from one perch to another along the track, before finally disappearing from our sight into the mangroves.

While it has been commonly heard, if not always seen, in the orchards and other cultivated areas on the terraces west and south of the centre, this is the first known record of this species on the Miranda coastline itself.

Stella Rowe



photo Ian Southey





BRIAN CHUDLEIGH



Brian Chudleigh features strongly in the history of Miranda Shorebird Centre. Much of our publicity material and interpretive displays have included his images. Many issues of Miranda News have been enhanced by his crisp photographs of waders and their Miranda habitat. In designing the display panels for the centre Adrian and I often turned to Brian for images we needed – be it a curlew sandpiper in breeding plumage, or mangrove flower or seedling. When it became clear that we needed a series of up to date aerial shots of the Firth coastline, Brian found himself perched in a very small plane charting the Miranda coast from above. The results, as we fully expected, were excellent.

For many years *Shorebirds of New Zealand: a photographic showcase* has been a best seller at Miranda. For me the back cover image of a sleeping Red-necked Stint encapsulates the essence of a Brian Chudleigh image. It almost seems as if the viewer is looking *up* at this sparrow-sized migrant. The patient vigil lying prone on the flats, a posture in which Brian has doubtless spent many hours, is evident in this one image.

But it is not just photography connecting Brian to Miranda. Anyone who has ever used the centre kitchen has done so on Brian's efforts. A cabinet-maker by trade, he built the shelves and cupboards as well as the mobile bench unit. In the manager's cottage stand two very large bookcases – more of Brian's work.

But for the last fourteen years or so, Brian has been living on borrowed time. Every year since 1993, when he received a full heart transplant, has been a bonus. But drugs taken to prevent the body rejecting the new heart also destroy the immune system. Now, at 70, Brian is dying of cancer. In this issue we publish some of his images as a tribute to him. A major retrospective of his work, sponsored by Environment Bay of Plenty opened in Tauranga on February 14.

Keith Woodley

The Field Course

My week at the Miranda Field Course 18th-24th January 2007

I was fortunate enough to spend six exciting and full-on days at the Miranda Shorebird Centre on their annual Naturalist Course. My week was kindly donated by the Auckland branch of OSNZ, who provided a wonderful scholarship for me to participate.

Arriving at the centre, the experiences to come excited me, as I had not been involved in bird conservation before. I was keen to learn a variety of skills as I am interested in all areas of conservation. Only a couple of hours after arriving the first session began, 'Wader Watch' down on the shell banks.

Here, I had my first introduction to the different shore birds and the coastline that would be my home for the next week. I was able to remember a few names, such as the Wrybill, Godwit and Knot, but further sessions throughout the week ensured I became an 'expert' in naming the local shorebirds. Throughout the week, I was able to sight Wrybill, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot, Golden Plover, Red-necked Stint, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, South Island Pied Oyster Catcher, Variable Oyster Catcher, Caspian Tern, Little Tern, Black backed Gull, Banded Dotterel and the New Zealand Dotterel. It was amazing to see some of the birds still in their breeding plumage that they use for camouflage reasons in the Arctic.

Ornithology prize to Auckland students

Two Auckland secondary school students were joint winners of the Auckland branch of OSNZ's inaugural student prize in ornithology. The prize, intended to encourage student interest in ornithology, is organised by the Auckland branch of the Ornithological Society.

Two year 13 biology students, Rosemarie Keen from Diocesan School for Girls, and Elizabeth Job from Pakuranga College, were joint winners. They both received a week on an ecology and bird study field course in January, run by the Miranda Naturalists, as well as a student membership each to OSNZ.

This is a fantastic opportunity for these students to get some first-hand knowledge of ornithology and meet lecturers and other students who have an enthusiasm for bird study and research. They both showed in their entries, that they already have a strong interest in bird study and the potential to take this interest more seriously in future studies. We hope that they will consider a career in ornithology, perhaps as the focus of university studies in ecology or conservation.

The top prize was awarded jointly as the judging panel felt the two winners were equally deserving of first place, and would benefit from sharing the experience on the Miranda Field

Course. Two runners up for the inaugural student prize, Isabelle Kember and Rebecca Short, each won a year's student membership to OSNZ. Three of the four student memberships were sponsored by OSNZ.

To enter, students had to answer questions about their background and involvement in birding, as well as their interest in future bird study and commitment to conservation. Entry was open to all Year 12 and 13 biology students in the Auckland area. The Auckland Branch intends to hold the Student Prize each year.

Suzi Phillips

The various tutors that came to the centre throughout the week were extremely inspiring and educational. Peter Maddison opened my eyes into the insect world, taking the group on a night walk through the Waharau Regional Park where we sighted Koura in the streams, Cave Wetas, a variety of spiders, Puriri moth nests and other creepy crawlies! Mike Wilcox, head of

The Class of '07 lined up where they spent much of their time.

Photo Marni Bullen



- 2007

the Auckland Botanical Society took the group exploring along the coastline and introducing the local coastal vegetation, and we learnt a variety of adaptations these plants have made in order to survive in this demanding environment. Biologist Phil Battley talked to the group on the migration of shorebirds and why Miranda is such an important location during this cycle. The afternoon with Phil was spent searching for organisms that are included in the shorebirds diet, these being small cockles, polychaetes (shore worm) and barnacles. Therefore, we were able to understand the importance of the Miranda coast for the birds in more depth. Bill Brownell, 'EcoQuest Education Foundation' founder took the group out exploring various aspects of the eco-system of the Firth of Thames. One of the most important issues covered was how specific land uses and the evolving mangrove plantations are affecting this vital eco-system and the future of its contingency. Keith Woodley, the centres manager, held a number of sessions on the conservation of the local shorebirds, or more importantly, the lack of it. He explained the need for each person who is interested in conservation to take action and support a cause that is in danger. The anatomy of a bird was discovered visually with the help of Andrew Hill, a vet surgeon originally from Australia who is now working on helping New Zealand's wildlife. He dissected a Bar-tailed Godwit carefully and the group were able to comprehend the complexity and special adaptations the bird species have made which enables them to fly long distances for breeding purposes each year. Stephen Davies covered bird topography and moult in more depth, which was vital to understand if proper records were to be taken at the mist and canon netting

sessions. These two sessions, taken by Stephen and Adrian Riegen, were extremely fun! Blackbirds, Song Thrushes, Silver eyes, Kingfisher, one fantail and house sparrow were caught throughout the mist netting processes. Once caught, the birds were banded, weighed, measured in bill and wing length and then the moult recorded. I was able to understand the importance of reliable and clear data, and this proved to be a very interesting and useful practice before canon netting the next morning. Being able to catch Wrybill, band, measure and weigh these delicate birds before releasing them was an absolute experience for me.

Overall, the week was always interesting and incredibly enjoyable at all times. I met some amazing people with all sorts of backgrounds which made the course just that much more fun. I have learnt so much on conservation, shorebirds and the environment, and I thank all those who helped organise and contribute to the course.

Rosemarie Keen
Photos Keith Woodley

Miranda Musk Spreading

Following Eila Lawton finding an area of the endemic *Mimulus*, *Mimulus repens*, near the hide in 2006, special attention was paid during the 2007 field course to search for this. The botany part of the field course was led by Mike Wilcox, president of the Auckland Botanical Society. Mike was pleased to see the plant and with a quick search several patches were found. It appeared to prefer sites that were under water in winter, and the clumps did not appear to have suffered from a "light" pugging. Thanks to Eila and Mike for confirming this occurrence. *Mimulus* is regarded as a threatened plant in the Auckland DoC Conservancy.

Peter Maddison.



from the MANAGER

An unusual dilemma presented itself in early December. A Song Thrush had chosen one of the hanging baskets in the central courtyard as a nesting site. It had been sitting for a few days during a period of light activity in that area. But when the 18 year ten students from a Hamilton school arrived to stay two nights, the prospects for the thrush became a little cloudy. However once the situation was explained to the students they did their best to minimize activity and noise in the immediate vicinity of the nest. This of course was quite a big ask for a bunch of youngsters enjoying their end of year camp.

The nest was quietly monitored from a distance, and each time it was heartening to see the cocked tail, or the large eye carefully looking back at the observer. Three chicks subsequently fledged and became a familiar presence around the centre and the cottage over the next few days. Less success was enjoyed by the sparrow pair who made two attempts to nest under the open/closed sign on the gate.

A late arrival in the season was a Marsh Sandpiper which for nearly a week could be found on the swallow pools just south of the centre. It subsequently disappeared but is likely to be one of the two later seen in the Bay of Plenty. Also of considerable interest was a solitary Curlew Sandpiper seen several times in mid January. As mentioned in previous issues this once common species (albeit in tiny numbers) has become a real stranger to the Firth of Thames in recent years. Given the dramatic decline in numbers along the entire flyway, this local absence is unlikely to be related to conditions here. Another comparative rarity in recent years is Siberian Tattler, one of which was regularly seen through December and January.

The Black-tailed Godwit here for much of last year appears to have moved on,



but the Hudsonian Godwit continues its lonely existence at Miranda. It has been here for well over a year and on most tides it can be seen in or more often around the edge of the main godwit flocks. Lonely? With so many godwits about? While it seems to be tolerated much of the time by the bartails, it is still subjected to regular harassment, perhaps by particular individuals. Usually such interactions are brief and the 'stranger' is then able to settle onto the roost. But if it is lonely for another of its own kind, it does not want for attention from birdwatchers for some of whom it is the highlight of their visit. Such is the lot of the vagrant; a lonely existence amidst a flurry of human interest.

Last autumn, in a repeat of the pattern from the previous year, the rail family on Widgery Lake became more reclusive. Once the three chicks fledged sightings became sporadic. As the lake level rose the thick vegetation around its edge gave plenty of cover and perhaps little need to emerge. From time to time one would be briefly glimpsed in transit along the lake edge, or skulking about on the edge of the mown grass. But by December the lake level was lower and they were once again making almost daily appearances. At least three individual birds seen together in early January suggested more than one pair may be in residence. On the first day of the field course three well grown chicks – perhaps 10-12 days old were seen. Since then many visitors have managed to get a good look at a rail from within the building or out on the front deck. Many others however have not. While being seen daily, the rails spend long periods out of sight so this season has lacked the frequency and reliability of last year when birds seemed to be on view continually.

Keith Woodley

photos by: from top to bottom Glenice Bullen, Keith Woodley, Keith Woodley and Jenni Hensley

SEABIRDS

Seabirds are generally less visible than waders, there are not big flocks of birds waiting on the coast to be seen, they are generally out of sight of the coast, and without a boat to get near them they are lost to all but the keenest of birdwatchers – but that doesn't mean they are not there!

In fact there may be more seabirds than any other group of birds in the world. There are only about 360 species of seabirds, but their numbers are high. While there are no worldwide population estimates of seabirds as a group there are some big numbers referred to. There are estimated to be more than 20 million seabirds breeding in New Zealand waters alone, add this to the 130 million from the North Atlantic, 4 million in the Falklands, 20 million in Alaska, and all of the birds breeding in the South Atlantic and South Indian Oceans, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean among others and the numbers start to add up. And due to the long life-spans of most seabirds a high proportion of the population is often non-breeding, for example while there are estimated to be 5 million Sooty Shearwater pairs breeding in New Zealand, there is an estimated New Zealand population of 15-30 million birds. Some of the most common birds in the world include seabirds such as Wilson's Storm-Petrel and Sooty Shearwaters.

A large number of the species on the New Zealand checklist are seabirds, not entirely surprising given our geological history and our large number of islands. Of the 365 species (always subject to change of course) on the New Zealand list more than 140 of them are in the groups regarded as seabirds; the number of seabird species found in New Zealand makes us a world centre for seabird diversity.

Eighty four of 140 seabird species found in New Zealand breed here and of these thirty five breed nowhere else in the world (nearly 10% of the total number of seabirds that exist). These species have diverse breeding strategies, some breed on islands, like the Fluttering Shearwater, others in the mountains, like Hutton's Shearwater, some breed in summer, like the Black Petrel which lays its eggs around November and December, others breed in winters like the Westland Black Petrel which lays its eggs around May. Most breed every year, but others such as the Royal Albatross, breed only every other year.

The other fifty six species are like the shorebirds that appear here each summer, they breed elsewhere and come to New Zealand waters during their non-breeding season, some in high numbers and some just as vagrants. They come from around the world, with many coming from other southern ocean areas, but with vagrants from as far as the Mediterranean and North Atlantic.

Seabirds is somewhat of a catch all term, including birds of a number of different families that share the characteristic of spending at least a part of their life at sea. Groups that are usually included in the term Seabird include:

- Penguins, Divers and Loons, Grebes,
- Albatrosses, Petrels, Prions
- Shearwaters, Storm-petrels,
- Diving-petrels, Frigatebirds,
- Tropicbirds, Cormorants,
- Boobies and Gannets,
- Pelicans, Phalaropes,
- Sheathbills, Skuas,
- Gulls, Terns,
- Skimmers and Auks and sometimes marine ducks.

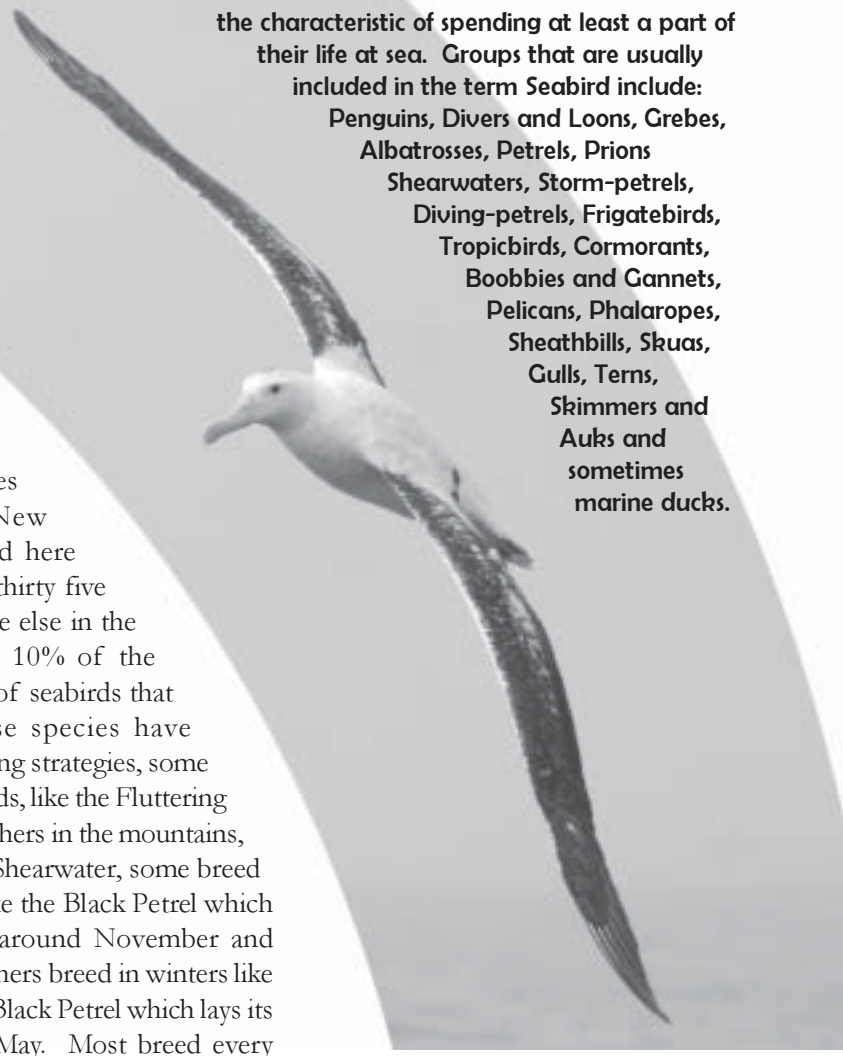


photo Ian Southey

SEABIRD MIGRATION

Most of the millions of seabirds around the world will leave their breeding grounds each year and move to different waters, birds of some



Seabirds from New Zealand migrate all directions, and species from all over the world come here. Information from Taylor 2000.

LONG-DISTANCE "RETURN" MIGRANTS

species will stay relatively close to home (relative - as a for a seabird a feeding trip even when they are tied to the nest can be hundreds of kilometres long), birds of other species will wander great distances, but not in a directional pattern, others will do large circumnavigations of the globe, while yet others will do a "return" migration where they leave the breeding grounds, journey to another part of the world for the non-breeding season, and then return back to the breeding grounds.

In many ways little is known about seabird migration. It occurs largely out of sight and studying birds at sea is expensive, time-consuming and difficult. Due to the lack of observers the use of banding and marking in seabirds provides much less information than it does in groups such as waders. In recent years however technology has allowed a glimpse into what birds actually do at sea. Attaching satellite transmitters and recording devices to seabirds has been occurring, starting with albatrosses and slowly moving to smaller and smaller birds. In some cases this has confirmed existing theories; in other cases it has turned them on their heads. The detail provided on Sooty Shearwater migration routes is very different than what was previously theorized (see box).

Technology is going to help with future looks at seabird non-breeding ranges

in more ways than just through satellite tracking technology. Use of new techniques such as stable isotope analysis may be able to show not only where birds go during the non-breeding season, but how widely they range on the way there and back and how they divide up the food while they are there. After years of being understudied simply because of the difficulties associated with working with birds that spend much of their time out of range of land it seems as if there will be an explosion of information in the near future.

SO HOW IS A SEABIRDS MIGRATION DIFFERENT FROM A SHOREBIRDS?

Like the seabirds shorebirds are known to use a number of different strategies. As with seabirds there are some that do not migrate, some which do short migrations, and others which do long migrations to very distant parts of the world. But unlike seabirds there are none which simply roam after leaving the breeding areas. Finally there are some species of both groups where individuals of one species which breed in the same area will use different migration strategies. Both the Banded Dotterel and the Grey-headed Mollymawk are examples of this (see box).

The long-distance migrants of both shore and seabirds are those that capture the imagination and the headlines, there are both similarities and differences in what they do, and how they do it.

Like shorebird species the seabird species that breed at the highest latitudes seem to have the most extreme migrations. But shorebirds breeding at high latitudes will do so only in the northern hemisphere, where they can breed on the tundra, seabirds will breed at the extreme latitudes in both the northern and southern hemisphere, limited only by the presence of a bit of land to breed on. This means that the long-distance migrations done by shorebirds are north to south and back again, like our Bar-tailed Godwit and Red Knot, while the long-distance migrations of seabirds can be from south to north, like the Mottled Petrel, north to south, like the Arctic Skua, east to west like the Fluttering Shearwater, or west to east, like the Chatham Islands Mollymawk.

Because seabirds breed over a much wider geographic area than shorebirds they can also breed over different timeframes, while the long-distance shorebird migrant species are confined to breeding in the Arctic summer (June and July) there are seabird species which do long migrations breeding at most times of the year. In New Zealand the Black Petrel breeds in our summer, while the Westland Petrel breeds in our winter, yet both will migrate as far as the Pacific coast of South America during the non-breeding period. For many seabird species, like Buller's Shearwater though there is not the requirement to desert the breeding areas, and a few individuals may stay near the breeding grounds while the majority migrate. For shorebirds however due to the winter climate where they breed they must leave the breeding grounds or die. In addition some of the albatrosses can take 9 to 10 months to breed and raise

THE GREY-HEADED MOLLYMAWK

This is a species which breeds around the southern oceans, with a New Zealand population found on Campbell Island, the migration patterns of this species have been poorly understood, in part probably due to the complexity that has been discovered when transmitters were put on them. Migration is not annual in this species as it takes around nine months to raise a chick.

A study on the island of South Georgia where geo-locators were attached to the legs of 22 birds for 18 months showed that during that period some of the albatrosses stayed in the breeding grounds, some did a return migration to a specific non-breeding ground in the southwest Indian Ocean, and others made one or more global circumnavigations, the fastest covering more than 22,000km in just 46 days. It appears that individuals may adapt the same strategy year after year. It is likely that the Grey-headed Mollymawks which breed in New Zealand do something similar.

It will take six or seven years for chicks to return to the breeding areas during that time they will range even more widely than the adults have.

THE SOOTY SHEARWATER STORY

There are estimated to be about 5 million breeding pairs of Sooty Shearwaters breeding in New Zealand waters, with a total of between 15 and 30 million birds (and very likely a higher number breeding in the waters around South America). In New Zealand they breed between September and April. Until recently it was thought that the migration pattern of these birds was a loop of the Pacific, leaving New Zealand, heading up towards Japan, crossing across the North Pacific near Alaska, coming back south past California, and then home to New Zealand.



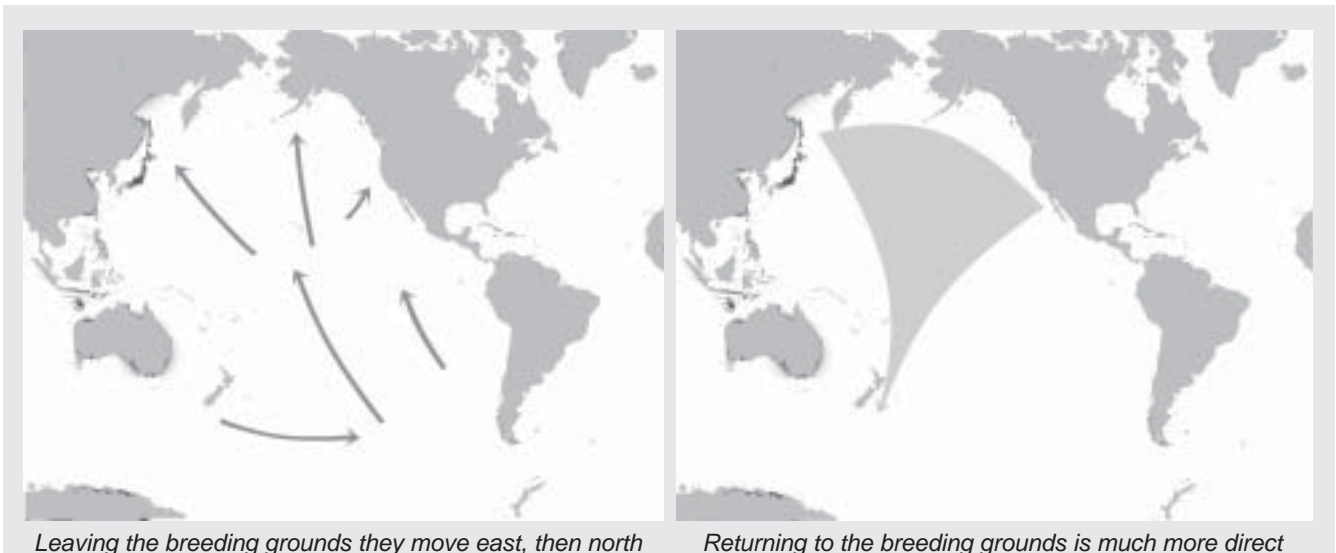
In early 2005 “archival tags”, which record the daily activities and movements of the birds they are attached to, were placed on 33 adult Sooty Shearwaters from several different breeding colonies in New Zealand waters. These tags record light levels (from which location can be determined), pressure and temperature. In late 2005 the tags were recovered from 20 of those birds and the data was analysed.

What researchers found was that between birds leaving the breeding grounds in April and their return in October they moved first east of New Zealand, where it appears likely that they feed up, getting ready for migration. During this time some move as far east as South America. Once they begin to fly north they fly north-east, using the winds to their advantage. The average distance covered during this period was more than 900km a day. As they moved into northerly areas, they flew into one of three wintering sites. The birds stayed in one of the three separate non-breeding grounds until they began to move south again. In the year that the transmitters were on all of the birds came south in early October, birds from all three wintering grounds came south at the same time, and they all crossed the equator near the centre of the Pacific Ocean. (There is evidence that in many years they come south earlier.)

The distance travelled by the Sooty Shearwater during its migration was more than 46,000km. Until recently the Arctic Tern has been assumed to have the longest migration flight, flying from its arctic breeding grounds to the Antarctic non-breeding grounds, a round trip of more than 22,000 km. The Sooty Shearwater has now taken the record, however when the technology allows for data-loggers small enough to fit on a tern the terns may well take the record back.

The behaviour of the young birds is likely to be different as they do not return to the breeding grounds until they are three to four years old, and may not breed for a few years after that.

The birds that breed off the east coast of South America are likely to show a similar migration pattern in the Atlantic Ocean.



Leaving the breeding grounds they move east, then north

Returning to the breeding grounds is much more direct

a chick, which means they migrate only every other year, this is not possible for the long-distance shore-bird migrants.

Although the direction and timing of seabird migrations can differ from those of shorebirds there are some other similarities. For those species which do a long-distance "return" migration shorebirds are known to gain weight before migration, stocking up on fuel. The evidence of this in seabirds is less clear, but it does seem to happen at least in some species such as Sooty Shearwater. Birds of both groups will fly quickly over areas that are not suitable for them, for shorebirds this means moving quickly between mudflats, for seabirds it will mean flying past areas of the ocean that are low in food. But while shorebirds will usually fly high during migration (averaging 1-2 km high), seabirds will usually fly low, using the lift generated off the ocean surface.

In both seabird and shorebirds there are some species or sub-species which make shorter migrations than others, Bar-tailed Godwits and Bristle-thighed Curlew breed at similar latitudes but while Bar-tailed Godwits migrate as far south as southern New Zealand most Bristle-thighed Curlews spend the non-breeding period on Pacific Islands. Similarly the Black-bellied Storm Petrel which breeds on subantarctic islands around Antarctica (including the Auckland and Antipodes Islands) migrates to the tropics while Mottled

Petrels which (in New Zealand waters) breed in Fiordland and islands to the south of New Zealand can migrate as far north as the Bering Sea.

Once the birds reach their non-breeding grounds they will generally stay there for several months and, as with adult shorebirds, adult seabirds of at least some species (for many species the information is simply not available) can be very site-faithful, returning to the same non-breeding area year after year.

Seabirds migrating do have the ability to stop and feed or rest along the way, while shorebirds migrating over water do not. However it appears that, for seabirds where there is reasonable information, they do not do this regularly. For species that do shorter migrations stopping to feed along the way may be more common, in the same way that when SIPO come up from the South Island to the North many choose to stop, feed and rest in estuaries and harbours along the way.

There are similarities between the migrations of the two groups, in other ways the biology of the groups is so different that there are many differences. But it appears that when our Bar-tailed Godwits are flying south from Alaska they may sometimes be looking down on our Sooty Shearwaters, also returning home. The skies are not a lonely place to be!

Gillian Vaughan

Fairy Prions are one of several species that can be seen in flocks of thousands in the waters around Auckland. Photo Ian Southey



OSNZ Firth of Thames Summer Census

Pied Oystercatcher	
1630	
Var. Oystercatcher	85
Golden Plover	62
N.Z. Dotterel	12
Banded Dotterel	0
Wrybill	97
Far Eastern Curlew	0
Asiatic Whimbrel	14
Whimbrel	0
Asiatic Black-t Godwit	0
Bar-tailed Godwit	8667
Marsh Sandpiper	1
Terek Sandpiper	0
Turnstone	19
Knot	5950
Sharp-tail S'piper	5
Pectoral Sandpiper	0
Red-necked Stint	5
Pied Stilt	419
Banded Rail	1

MUDFLAT WADERS 16,967

Black Shag	26
Pied Shag	223
Little Black Shag	2
Little Shag	6
Spotted Shag	0
W F Heron	136
White Heron	1
Reef Heron	1
Cattle Egret	0
Royal Spoonbill	0
Spur-winged Plover	182
Black-backed Gull	150
Red-billed Gull	45
Black-billed Gull	552
Caspian Tern	73
Little Tern	0
White-fronted Tern	172

TOTAL 1569

Comment:

Fifty-four of the golden plovers were recorded at Karito, near the Miranda Hot Springs, the other eight were recorded at Kawakawa Bay, there are now regular sightings at the Limeworks/shellbank area.



Look at recent issues of MNT
News and NZWSG News
www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz

From the Blackboard
1 February 2007

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Ashley Reid (Treasurer)

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Phil Hammond Sue Reid

Wendy Hare Gillian Vaughan

Len Taylor John Gale (Ex officio)

Membership Rates

Ordinary Member - \$35

Family Member - \$40

Overseas Member- \$40

Life Member, under 50 - \$1050

Life Member, 50 and over - \$525

Membership of the Trust entitles you to –

- Four Miranda News issues per year.
- A \$5 discount on overnight accommodation
- Invitations to Trust Events
- The right to attend the Annual General Meeting
- The right to vote for council members

Help support the Trust's efforts to educate and promote conservation awareness.

Bequests

Remember the Miranda Naturalists' Trust in your Will and ensure that our vital work in education and protection of the migratory shorebirds can continue. For further information and a copy of our legacy letter contact the Shorebird Centre.

Accommodation

The Centre at Miranda has three bunkrooms for hire plus two self-contained flats:

Per bed / night member \$12.50

Per bed / night non-member \$17.50

Hire of flat member \$40.00

Hire of flat non-member \$50.00

For further information contact Keith at the
Shorebird Centre, RD3 Pokeno
Phone /Fax (09) 232 2781

Arctic Migrants

<i>Bar-tailed Godwit</i>	4700
<i>Hudsonian Godwit</i>	1
<i>Turnstone</i>	11
<i>Red-necked Stint</i>	7
<i>Curlew Sandpiper</i>	1
<i>Sharp-tailed sandpiper</i>	14
<i>Terek Sandpiper</i>	1
<i>Golden Plover</i>	13
<i>Grey-tailed Tattler</i>	1
<i>Red Knot</i>	4000

New Zealand Species

<i>Pied Oystercatcher</i>	lots
<i>Wrybill</i>	1950
<i>NZ Dotterel</i>	5
<i>Banded Dotterel</i>	47
<i>Variable Oystercatcher</i>	
<i>Black-billed Gull</i>	
<i>Red-billed Gull</i>	
<i>White-fronted Tern</i>	
<i>Caspian Tern</i>	
<i>Pied Stilt</i>	
<i>White Heron</i>	1

Want to be involved?

The Miranda Garden

If you want an excuse to stay at Miranda for a couple of week nights free of charge, come and help a small team of gardeners maintain the gardens. It is satisfying and worthwhile work in the outdoors. We make the time enjoyable especially when we down tools at high tide and go and watch the birds on the shell banks. If interested phone Keith on 232 2781 who will put you on to a gardener!

Firth of Thames Census

Run by OSNZ and held twice a year the Census days are a good chance to get involved with ongoing field work and research.

Friends of Miranda

A volunteer group which helps look after the Shorebird Centre during busy periods and in Keith's absence. If you'd like to spend time helping out contact Keith. Helping out can be anything from helping with the shop, school groups or meeting people down at the shellbanks.

Long term Volunteers

Spend four weeks or more on the shoreline at Miranda. If you are interested in staffing the visitor centre, helping with school groups or talking to people on the shellbank for a few weeks contact Keith to discuss options. Free accommodation is available in one of the bunkrooms. Use of a bicycle will be available.

The Magazine
never forget you are
welcome to contribute
to the MNT NEWS

