



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

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Otago Region Newsletter 7/2008 August 2008

Film Premiere

The NZ premiere of Sandy Crichton's film "Karearea: The Pine Falcon" starring George Chance will be shown on Wednesday, 27 August at the usual indoor meeting venue, Benham Seminar Room, Department of Zoology, at 8 p.m.

Renowned film critic Hamish Spencer says "*I have had a sneak preview and it is a wonderful film, a moving tribute to George*"

Please come along and encourage everyone else to do so as well.

Ornithological Snippets

A **White Heron** was seen again in the Botanic Gardens on 28 July. Tim reports "Today at 1:20pm a White Heron landed and perched in the large gum trees at the bird aviary at the upper Dunedin Botanic Garden. The bird wasn't active (ie. no preening), just looking at the view. The bird was gone by 1:30pm. Interestingly, the local wildlife were not perturbed by the large bird's presence (i.e. no alarm calls), as opposed to their behaviour when a falcon perches in the same tree."

One of the two breeding plumaged **Bar-tailed Godwits** at Warrington (with 17 immatures) on August 1 was banded there in February 2006 as an adult male. It has subsequently been seen at Warrington several times over the last two summers. Unfortunately it was limping and although it was hard to tell if the cause was the bands, its condition may well have been the reason why it didn't return to Alaska this year.

Derek Onley saw an immature **NZ Falcon** in Waitati on 29 July and Elton Smith subsequently saw what was probably the same bird cruise across the Orokonui Eco-sanctuary on 6 August.

A **Far-Eastern Curlew** was found at Karitane on 20 July and was still there on the 6 August. This is the first record for Otago in 13 years and the only one since 1966 to be seen in winter.



For all those sceptics who thought it was only a Magpie.....



here is a photo of the Magpie Lark seen at South Westland on 29th April 2008 after a big westerly storm. It was identified by the Stewart-Long family, living at the mouth of Gorge River, two days' walk from a road end. Magpie larks are common throughout Australia but rarely make it as far as Tasmania so maybe there were some grounds for scepticism.

Notices and Business

Sea trip

The trip on the Polaris II was cancelled due to bad weather but Russell Canning russelcannings@shaw.ca hopes to organise another shorter one in October and would like to hear from those interested in going out to sea.

The George Chance Census of Great Crested Grebes in Central Otago, February 2009

This census has been set for the weekend of 21 and 22 February 2009. February was suggested back in November last year by George, in a discussion with Dawn Palmer, since February is the best time to get a post breeding count. It was his experience that the highest numbers were counted then, later than that they seemed to move out of breeding areas.

This census is a follow up from the one carried out in January 2004 to see what differences were come across. The total for Central Otago in 2004 was 97 adults and 27 juveniles. Anecdotal reports indicate that there was a dramatic increase this last breeding season. Lake Hayes in 2004 had a maximum of 57 adults and 18 juveniles. On 17 March 2008 Dawn Palmer counted at Lake Hayes 104 adults and 40 juveniles. Lake Dunstan had in 2004 11 adults and 16 juveniles. The number in November 2007 was 35.

Numbers at Lakes Wanaka and Hawea was high, but that was in winter 2007. In January 2004 Wanaka had 4, including 2 juveniles and Wanaka had none. Next year we will be able to find out if there are breeding populations on these lakes.

The census involves checking all lakes. The large ones will be tackled by motorized boats, but we may need additional kayaks, and the smaller ones by car/foot.

For logistic purposes, organizing transport, accommodation, the latter two most likely subsidized, we would like to have names of participants interested in this exciting project as soon as possible.

Peter Schweigman, on behalf of Mary Thompson

Long Point, Catlins.

We have been asked by the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust to survey the birds of their new reserve in the Catlins, near Long Point, south-east of Owaka. See the April newsletter for an account of the preliminary visit. The survey will involve walking around the reserve counting landbirds, checking the cliffs for nesting seabirds – visually from land unless some more intrepid members would like to take to the water – and maybe staying out after dark to listen for shearwaters and the like. Everything in fact except Yellow-eyed Penguins. Ideally it would be interesting to get out to

Cosgrove Island as well. How much we do and whether we go down for one day or the weekend depends on how keen you all are. The date: 8 and/or 9 November. If you are interested please contact Derek Onley or Peter Schweigman as soon as possible.

Glenorchy Trip 24-26 October

Accommodation is booked in a house at Routeburn Station for this long weekend. There are beds or bring sleeping bags to sleep on the floor or tents. Plenty of room for all.

The house is close to the beginning of the Routeburn and Greenstone tracks, the Rees and Dart Valleys. Anyone who wants to go off tramping could stay the night.

All the native forest birds are nearby, Robins, Kakariki, Mohua at Lake Sylvan. Falcons nest on the hillsides. Beautiful beech forests from river level upto the high peaks, river, lake and swamp habitats are within easy reach. There is plenty to see and all levels of activity. All welcome.

Contact Louise Foord 4675041.

Trial of Email Newsletter

Many of you will have received a pdf copy of this Newsletter by email as well as mail. It is quite a big job to photocopy, collate, address and post the newsletters so if you are happy to receive the newsletter **only by email**, or if you would like to but didn't, please send your email address with your request to mary.thompson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Book Launch.

Meet Tui De Roy and Mark Jones for drinks and nibbles to celebrate their new book

Albatross: Their world, their ways.

Otago Museum

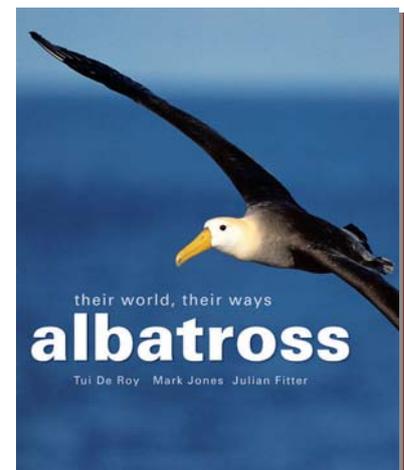
5.30pm, Tuesday 26 August

Space is limited, so please RSVP to

Sue Maturin, 03 477 9677

or by email: s.maturin@forestandbird.org.nz

\$5 door charge to Forest & Bird to support the 'Save the Albatross' campaign.



Programme 2008/9

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street at 8 p.m.
Please be on time: the door will be locked after 8 p.m.

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| Wednesday, 27 August | Indoor Meeting
This meeting will feature the NZ premiere of Sandy Crichton's film "Karearea: The Pine Falcon" starring George Chance. Hamish Spencer says "I have had a sneak preview and it is a wonderful film, a moving tribute to George" |
| Wednesday, 24 September | Indoor Meeting Speaker: Franny Cunninghame
Franny has recently returned from South America where she worked on a number of conservation oriented bird projects. She will talk about the Macaw project and promises to add some pretty pictures of the birds she saw at the end. |
| Wednesday, 22 October | Indoor Meeting Speaker: Derek Onley
Paraguay |
| Labour Weekend
24-26 October | Glenorchy Weekend Fieldtrip.
Contact Louise Foord, ☎ 467 5041 |
| 8-9 November | Survey of Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's new reserve at Long Point in the Catlins |
| 22nd Nov 2008 | Summer Wader Count. High tide is 12.43 at Dunedin and approximately 11.43 at Aromoana. Height 2.0m. |
| 21-22 February 2009 | The George Chance Census of Great Crested Grebe in Otago. |

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Final date for copy for next newsletter: 17 September