

MIRANDA

Naturalists' Trust

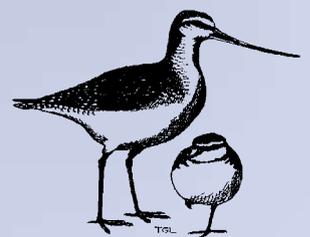
February 2011 Issue 80

NEWS



Birdlife International

Geolocators on Knots and Turnstones



February 2011 Issue 80

Upcoming Events note the times!

NOT ON YOUR PROGRAMME

NATURE JOURNALLING AT MIRANDA

Part 1 Fri 13 - Sun 15 May 2011 Tutor Sandra Morris - See details pg 3

May 22 Sunday 9 a.m.

Annual General Meeting:

Birdwatching FIRST as early tide TALK 11 a.m

Guest Speaker: Dr Robert Hoare - The Ghosts on the Coast and other Mythic Moths of Miranda

June 19 Sunday

OSNZ - Firth of Thames, Wader Census: Ph Tony Habraken 09-238-5284 for details

August 27th (Sat)

Working Bee 10a.m.-3p.m.

Birdwatching 4p.m.-6p.m.

August 27th (Sat) 2011

Winter Pot Luck Dinner 6pm

Guest Speaker: Tony Wilson - Birding Travels

Come for one or all events. All welcome!

Contact the Centre for details of these events. 09 232 2781

Front Cover: The track to the hide after the storm during the field course. Photo Adrian Riegen

Back Cover: Sharp-tailed Sandpiper displaying on the Stilt Ponds in February 2011. Photos Ian Southey.

We Want You!

The theme of this issue has turned out to be linkages, between organisations and between sites. One of the focuses for the Trust in the upcoming years will be building linkages, not only direct with other shorebird sites, but with other organisations that are working in the same areas as we are, Ramsar and various Flyway Partnerships have been well mentioned in past issues of the MNT News, linkages with Forest and Bird, and Birdlife international less so, and these are important partners for the Trust in continuing its work in conservation. The two articles about these groups in this issue give us some background about the organisations and the work they do now. In future I hope that the Trust will work in partnership with these groups in keeping the birds coming.

Ashley Reid has informed council that he will not be standing as Treasurer at the upcoming AGM. Ashley has been a stalwart of the Trust for many years now and I would like to thank him for the work that he has done. The Trust will therefore be looking for a new treasurer. If you are interested in the details of this role please contact either Ashley, myself or Keith, and we can fill you in on some of the details!

I apologise for the late arrival of this issue of the News, the deadline for the next issue is 1 April.

Gillian Vaughan 

From the Blackboard 15 February 2011

Arctic Migrants

Bar-tailed Godwit	3000
Red Knot	600
Turnstone	25
Golden Plover	61
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	3
Pectoral Sandpiper	1
Curlew Sandpiper	3
Grey-tailed Tattler	1
Little Tern	1

New Zealand Species

Pied Oystercatcher	
Wrybill	2000
Banded Dotterel	100
NZ Dotterel	
Variable Oystercatcher	
Black-billed Gull	
White-fronted Tern	
Black-fronted Tern	1
Caspian Tern	
Pied Stilt	500
Royal Spoonbill	5
Bittern	1
White Heron	1

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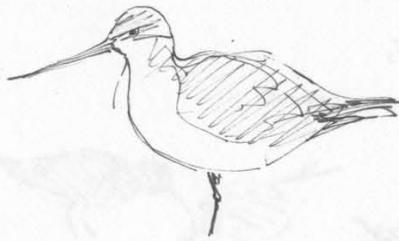
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The Newsletter of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust is published four times a year to keep members in touch, and to bring news of events at the Miranda Shorebird Centre and along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. No part of this publication may be reproduced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

NATURE JOURNALLING AT MIRANDA

Part 1 Friday 13 - Sunday 15 May 2011

Part 2 Sunday 2 - Tuesday 4 October 2011



BAR TAILED GODWITS
ROOSTING - TWISTING AROUND
WHILE STANDING ON ONE FOOT -
IS THE SCANNING & FOR DANCE?
SEVERAL CLOURED UP GODWITS
IN THE FLOCK TODAY.

BIG GROUP OF B.B. GULLS ROOSTING
WITH 1 FRONTED TERN + CASPIAN TERN +
S.I.P.O.

HUGE NUMBER OF WRYBILL PUT UP
AND FLASHING IN THE LIGHT
AND FLOCK SPOKING IN
THE EVENING

MIRANDA SHELLBANK ON A COLD DAY

Join Sandra Morris (wildlife author/illustrator) for a weekend of

Nature Journalling May 13- 15th. Learn how to draw for identification or just for pleasure from the natural world around the Shore-banks. This workshop will



VIRERS + BUGLOSS
MIRANDA SHELLBANK
6.12.08

award-winning fish and chips and an evening of browsing through Sandra's extensive library of natural history books and nature journals. Maybe we'll have time for some inspiring documentaries. A follow up workshop will run from the evening of Sunday the 2nd of October until Tuesday the 4th. We will work with specific exercises to get up to speed then venture down to the shell banks and, with the use of telescopes, visually record in our journals the feeding wading birds as they

come in on the high tide to roost on the shell banks. Tide times and heights are good for these two days so we will get plenty of practice!! The workshop will commence on the Sunday evening with a meal of local fish and chips and book browsing, etc.

We encourage you to attend one or both workshops - whatever suits. Come and be inspired and surprised at what you can achieve with a little guidance.

We may even be lucky to get a good sunset down there.

During this workshop special attention will be given to composition and the various ways of incorporating hand drawn lettering.

Join us on Friday evening for a meal of



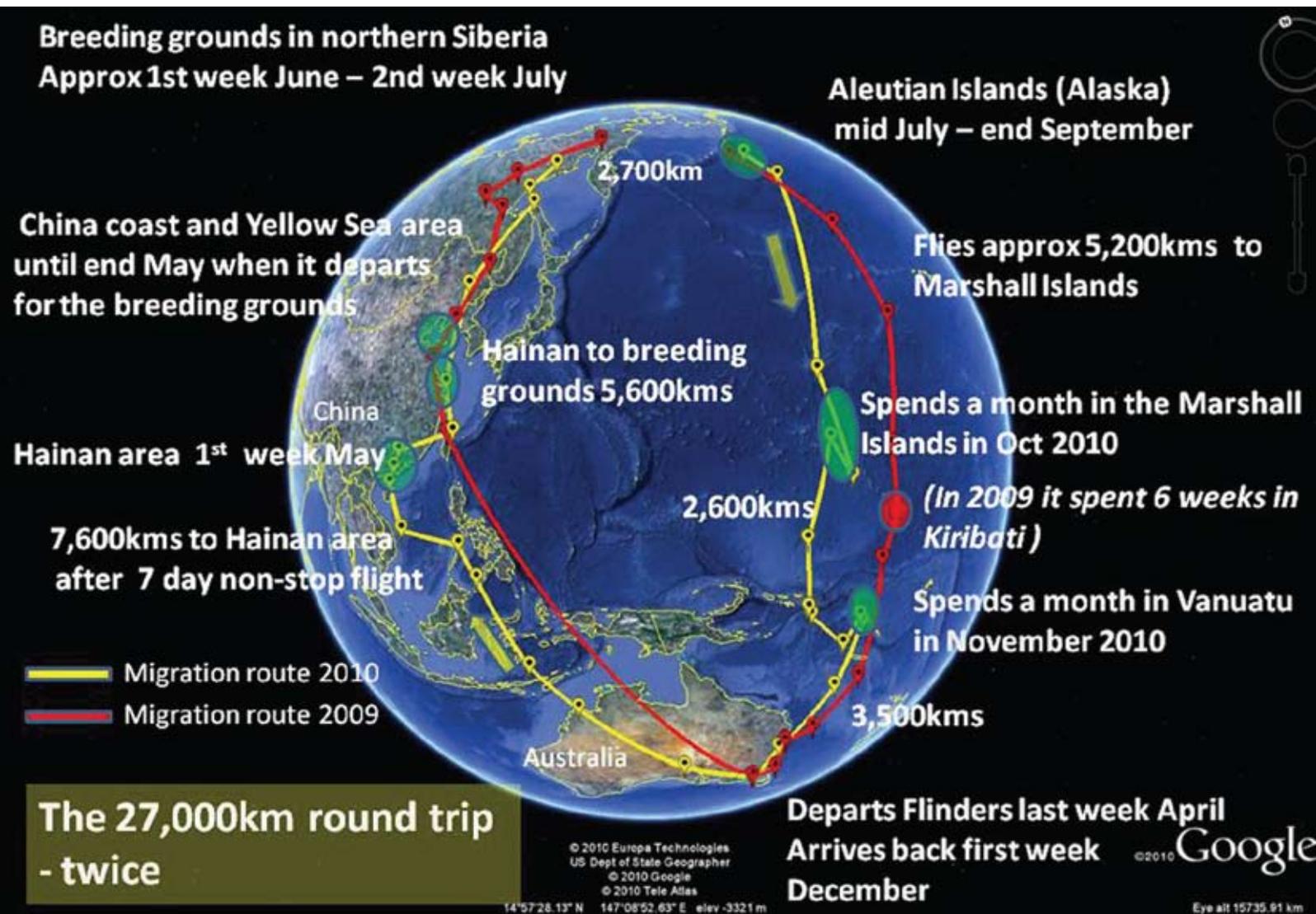
Ruddy Hell: Turnstone Flies 27,000 Kilometres – Twice !!

AWSG Press Release



photo Ian Southey

For more about the work of the AWSG visit www.awsg.org.au



Wader researchers from the Victorian Wader Study Group in Australia have just recaptured a Ruddy Turnstone which has completed a 27,000 km round trip migration for the second time. The bird had a one gram light sensor data logger (geocator) attached to its leg. This device recorded where the bird was each morning and evening. In each year the device was attached to the bird in

mid April on a beach at Flinders, Victoria, in southeast Australia.

Ruddy Turnstones are a small wader weighing less than 100 grams and spend the (austral) summer months on many of the beaches around Australia. They are one of the family of waders that migrate huge distances to Siberia in Russia to breed.

Researchers have used these data logging devices over the last two years to find out the key stopover locations which are so important for the birds to refuel on their long journey.

Members of the study group include Dr Clive Minton, Ken Gosbell, Penny Johns and Prof Marcel Klaassen (of Deakin University).

“This is a fantastic result for our study group, which is also supported by a fantastic group of volunteers,” Dr Minton said.

“The data retrieved so far shows that the birds generally start their northward migration with an initial non-stop flight of around 7,600km in six days to Taiwan or adjacent regions.

“There they refuel on the tidal flats before moving north to the Yellow Sea and northern China. They then make a flight of over 5,000kms to the breeding grounds in northern Siberia, arriving in the first week of June.

“One of the interesting findings is that after breeding, the return journey shows considerable variation, no two birds following the same route. Some return through Asia while an amazing alternate route has been demonstrated by these new results.

“This is a trans-Pacific route where the bird moves east to the Aleutian Islands off southwest Alaska before making the huge journey across the Pacific, stopping only once or twice before reaching Australia in early December.”

The first record of this flight was in 2009 when the bird spent nearly two months in the Aleutians before setting off southward over the Pacific Ocean and making a nonstop flight of 7,800kms to Kirabati (formerly Gilbert Islands), where it stayed for six weeks before making the 5,000km trip back to Flinders, Victoria. In 2010 the same bird undertook a similar incredible journey, this time stopping off in the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu in the Pacific before returning to Australia.

Turnstones live up to 20 years and such a bird following this 27,000 km trans-Pacific route would have flown over 500,000 kilometres in its lifetime.

Scientists from the Australasian Wader Studies Group of Birds Australia and Deakin University are still puzzling over why individual Ruddy Turnstones from the same breeding and non-breeding population should use such widely differing routes for their annual migrations. The study shows the importance of key regions within the flyway. Scientists are concerned about the ability of these and similar birds to cope with the massive habitat changes occurring as a result of large reclamation and urban development projects.



Weka Watch Kawakawa Bay Inc

Three WekaWatch members recently visited the senior class at Orere School. It was heartening to learn that about 50% of the children had seen Weka themselves either at Orere Point or in Kawakawa Bay. We have suggested that they have a map of Orere where they can mark the places where Weka have been seen. We have also been talking to a resident of Ness Valley who is hearing calls in his bush that are almost certainly Weka calls, so we can follow these reports up during our 2011 counts. And an Orere resident is seeing a Weka as he comes down the Orere hill into Kawakawa Bay in the mornings on his way to work. Do keep those reports coming!

Preliminary dates for 2011 Keep the Saturdays in April free or some of them at least.

The 2011 Weka counts will be held on the evenings of the 2nd, 9th, 16th and 30th of April (Not on the Easter weekend).

The 2011 AGM will be on the 2nd of April in The Cottage, 5 Kawakawa – Orere Road at 3.00 p.m. After a short meeting we hope to have a speaker, to be announced, then a short break before we head off for the first count. There will be a pot luck dinner after the count on 16th.

If you'd like to join in with these events note these dates in your 2011 diaries, for reminders email Wekawatch@paradise.net.nz.

Keep up to date by
visiting the new website!
<http://www.Wekawatch.co.nz/>

Rosemary Cotman 

from the Manager

- some field course reflections

Keith Woodley

It was just coincidence. Since beginning the annual field courses in 1999 we have had a good run with weather. There has been the odd wet day, but seldom sufficient to disrupt the order of proceedings indoors or out. So it was perhaps inevitable one day that would change, and as the remnants of two tropical cyclones merged into one



and descended mid way through the 2011 course, the thirteenth, it threatened to impact the two key days – mist-netting and cannon-netting. As it happened the mist-netting had to be rescheduled from early morning to mid afternoon yet nearly 60 birds were caught and banded, including a Shining Cuckoo – a first for the programme. That night gale force winds battered the place during the small hours and while conditions had improved slightly as dawn broke, it was insufficient to prevent cancellation of cannon-netting. It was a major blow as this event has come to be something of a centrepiece for each course. In a form of displacement activity it was decided we would go out to the hide anyway and spend the morning birding.

The low pressure system had lifted the king tide into the paddocks where it joined with a good deal of surface water from heavy rain the day before. Between the Centre and the Limeworks gate the seaward side of the road was a mass of water – the Stilt Ponds and surrounding area had become one vast wet sheet. As a re-

sult access from the gate to the hide was through water that for me was knee-deep. But at least it was warm water.

Four days later, the remains of tropical cyclone Wilma passed southeast across the top of the country dumping even more rain. The Stilt Ponds had not drained all week but now even more area was underwater. At the junction of Miranda and East Coast roads paddocks on both sides of the road were swathes of wind-rippled brown water, half submerged silage bales and fence lines. Widgery Lake rose to the edge of the lawn below the front deck of the centre. This in itself was astonishing; usually it is a series of shallow puddles - or completely dry by late January. The real bonus from all this was manifested in our water tanks. Shortly before the field course we had the equivalent of just under one tank full; now they were overflowing.

The birds, unaware of their reprieve from cannon netting, had doubtless had a rough night, yet they were all strung out ahead of the advancing tide pretty much as usual. Among

them was a Hudsonian Godwit – a small male coming into breeding plumage, and quite possibly the same individual we have had fairly regularly in recent years but which had not been seen for some months. However its presence that morning did not solve the vagrant godwit question. Several days earlier David Melville had watched what he took to be a Black-tailed Godwit land in the Stilt Ponds. A short time later I was watching a bird that could have been, particularly in colouration, the bird in question. However it then obligingly lifted its wings and showed its ‘black armpits’ – a diagnostic feature for hudsonians. Yet David had reported a lot of white on the underwing of the bird he had seen, which is diagnostic for black-tailed. Over the past few months a black-tailed had been frequenting Miranda - a somewhat scrawny, noticeably small male. Normally the longer legs of a black-tailed give it a more lanky appearance than the other godwits – a useful field characteristic. Somewhat unhelpfully, the recent black-tailed had overall similar dimensions to a small bar-tailed – or hudsonian! It



seems likely we had three species of godwits present that day, but unlike the situation during an earlier wader ID course when all three were lined up in one scope view – these vagrants remained discretely segregated and elusive.

During this most recent one I found myself reflecting on thirteen years of field courses, and how they have evolved and expanded over that time. The overall structure of the week remains similar to the inaugural one in 1999, though much of the content has changed or expanded considerably. Several years ago we extended the course by a day, partly to enable us to space sessions more and allow participants more downtime. But somehow the extra time has been filled up with more content! In some cases the additional content has evolved directly out of a preceding course. One participant in 2003 for example was a vet then based at Massey University. When a dead blackbird was brought in, Richard, who just happened to have his instruments with him, offered to do a dissection. The subsequent session showing how birds are constructed had everyone captivated. For the next two years Richard volunteered to return with his dissection kit and subsequently,

when he moved on, nominated successors to fill the role. Hence Anatomy of a Bird remains firmly embedded in our programme. Jodi, our most recent tutor, has elevated this session even further: dissection as elucidation and performance.

In the context of the fast age we live in, thirteen years is a rather long span as we can see if we look back at technology then and now. The series of logbooks compiled at the conclusion of each course chart these advances. The early ones are bulky folders of text and photos printed from film. Remember them? Digital cameras have revolutionised everything. Later logbooks, each prepared by a course participant, are compiled and laid out digitally and some of them look thoroughly professional. Early sessions on migration, wader ID and conservation relied heavily on our fixed display panels and other printed material; now power point presentations are commonplace. Looking at invertebrates under microscopes has been greatly enhanced in recent years by a camera lens which transfers images in real time onto the big screen. That is not just a nereid worm, it is gigantic and moving! Also enhanced is the value of wader watch field sessions now that we have the means to

equip each participant with a scope and tripod.

It is the customary way to commence each field course. Participants introduce themselves and something of their background and what it is they are anticipating from the week. There were only ten of them this year, but the diversity of backgrounds and interests was astonishing: an immigrant from Germany in the 1960s who prior to leaving had been involved with bird banding; a young nurse from Thames contemplating a change in direction; a consents compliance officer from Environment Canterbury; a photographer specialising in arts and crafts who, after recent cataract operations has been given 'the birding eyes I have always wanted'; a retiree involved with Stream Care and Forest and Bird in Horowhenua; a retired police sergeant, wine aficionado and long time Miranda member; an Air New Zealand staff member who won a place on the course via a company competition; a woman who spent part of her school days in Berkeley, California and Oak Ridge, Tennessee – two names which, post-Rutherford, resonate through the decades since; an immigrant from Somerset now resident on an island in the Bay of Islands; and an immigrant from the Isle of Man now living in the eastern Bay of Plenty. In an outcome not uncommon in this place, during their time here the last two established that their fathers had been at school together on the Isle of Man.

Listening to this round of introductions I pondered the range of people who had done the course previously. The age span alone is extraordinary: the youngest, 14 - the oldest, 83. Literally from all over the country: Invercargill to the Far North. As well as three from the UK, two from China, one from Malaysia, and one from Australia. With a diversity of people and events there comes a range of intriguing moments. A random selection: a line of course participants

The Stilt Ponds, renamed the Stilt Lakes for a week. Photo Keith Woodley



beside the stilt pools looking at E7 – the first sighting of this stellar god-wit on this side of the bay for nearly a year since she received her satellite tag in February 2007; gazing upon the spectacular Comet McNaught over several nights during the 2007 course; the cook for one year turning up driving a small pickup with a load of gravel –raising eyebrows among participants as to what they were to be fed; memorable images of Dick Veitch gnawing on a plate of bones; standing at the end of a mist net in the mud off Taramaire one night discussing the novels of Patrick O’Brian with playwright Roger Hall.

So what are the factors behind the ongoing success of this event? Its location is a magical place for one thing and there are always big flocks of birds to enthral and enthuse. We also have some great stories to tell. But none of these in themselves are sufficient explanation. The answer ultimately lies in the calibre of our tutors, and in this we have been extremely fortunate. For the most part volunteers, they are exceptional people, and here are a few examples. For the first four courses John Charteris, experienced teacher, science advisor and ecologist enthusiastically conducted the opening session – an overview of the Firth of Thames ecosystem. Since 2004 this role has

been filled by Bill Brownell, another highly experienced ecologist and marine biologist, and a Firth of Thames local. Warwick Sandler, teacher, artist, philosopher, conducted the early mud sampling sessions in which course participants got to see what shorebirds eat. In 2006 other commitments took Warwick elsewhere, and Peter ‘I raised spiders for that movie’ Maddison who had joined our team several years earlier, bringing with him a lifetime’s knowledge of the invertebrate world, expanded his role to help fill the gap. So microscope sessions looking at creatures from the mud or from around the centre, as well as a night walk at Waharau Regional Park are firm fixtures in the itinerary.

From the beginning Dick Veitch, having retired from a long career in the Wildlife Service and DoC, was a pivotal contributor throughout the duration of the course. Over the last few years other interests have led him to diminish his role, though he is still a regular for the last three days. This significant gap has been ably filled by David Melville, who has had wide experience in all manner of field biology, wildlife study and management. For every course except one, Adrian Riegen has run the cannon-netting and banding operation, such a key component of our programme.

However that exception, that absence one year, precludes him from a further distinction. Likewise Dick, who would also have qualified. While tutors have changed, and the above are just some of those who have contributed, and even course convenors have changed over the years, Stephen Davies and the Centre Manager share the distinction of having been involved with all thirteen courses.

And finally, there is the person who began it all. Her experience of earlier field courses run every now and again by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, led then council member Bev Woolley to the idea of running something at Miranda. Her vision and energy ensured the first one got under way and it is significant that while the content and order of events have changed over the years, we still adhere to that first structure – a highly successful model. After three courses, the convenor’s role passed to Eila Lawton - graduate of course number three, who stayed on board until the end of number twelve. During that time the course, as we have seen, was constantly evolving, constantly being refined. So we come to number thirteen and the initiation of new convenor, Brigid Glass, and the first one where we were seriously challenged by weather disruptions. It was just coincidence, Brigid! 🐦



Flyway Partnership Meeting In Cambodia

David Lawrie

The fifth meeting of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway partnership was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia in early December. David Lawrie represented the Miranda Naturalists' Trust and was the sole representative from New Zealand. The meeting had representatives from 24 partners and there were also observers from other governments and prospective partners.



North Korea was represented by two people for the first time as a prospective future partner. In total there were approximately 80 people in attendance.

The purpose of the partnership is to provide a flyway wide framework to promote dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between the range of stake holders including all levels of government, site managers, multi-lateral environment agreements, technical institutions, UN agencies, development agencies, industrial and private sector and non-government organisations, to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

The goal adopted by the partnership is: "migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway are recognised and conserved for the benefit of people and biodiversity".

Because of the location of New Zealand at the extremity of the flyway and because many of the migratory species do not reach New Zealand there were a number of discussions that had no relevance to New Zealand. However there were several matters of significance to New Zealand

and these are summarised below.

- The existing site information held on the flyway sites is to be upgraded. This will require NGOs and the government in each country to check and revise the information.
- This site information is to include boundary mapping which can be shown on the EAA Flyway website with easily accessible information.
- Each partner is to undertake a baseline assessment of the status of flyway network sites to ensure that their importance is being maintained. It is also recommended that a similar number of non-flyway sites be monitored to provide a comparison of risk.
- A task force was established to develop a work plan by which EAAFP can enhance conservation outcomes in the Yellow Sea eco region through international cooperation including integration with and support to appropriate existing initiatives. This is the region where the Miranda Naturalists' Trust has been active and that work would be included within the work plan.

- Further agreement was obtained over the protocols for colour marking shorebirds in which New Zealand has been very active.

- The Ramsar Organisation is to lead the establishment of a CEPA working group within the partnership to promote the importance of migratory waterbirds.

- WWF (Hong Kong) are promoting and developing a new shorebird action plan to ensure healthy populations of shorebirds that can successfully migrate between their breeding and wintering grounds.

With the large and diverse membership of the partnership, decision making could be slow and unwieldy. However I was impressed with the leadership and momentum provided by the secretariat lead by Roger Jaensch and his team who are located in Incheon, Republic of Korea. Without that leadership, progress could be difficult to achieve.

I would also acknowledge the excellent organisation of the conference by the Government of Cambodia and also for arranging the excellent field trips. 

Paper Summary

First Results using light level geolocators to track Red Knots in the Western Hemisphere show rapid and long intercontinental flights and new details of migration pathways.

Niles et al. (2010) Wader Study Group Bulletin, Vol 117, Number 2

Summary by Gillian Vaughan

Godwits are not the only species currently having their every move tracked. Too small for satellite tracking devices, geolocators like those attached to godwits at the Manawatu Estuary, were attached to 47 Red Knots during their stopover at Delaware Bay, in New Jersey, USA. Three of these birds were recaptured a year later. This paper presents the first findings of this work, which both reinforced known information and provided details not previously known about the migration of Red Knot in the Americas.

The first step was to determine if carrying the 1.7 gram geolocators had any effect on the knots which carried them. Initial studies of behaviour did not show any differences between knots carrying geolocators and those without them, so further birds were given dataloggers to carry along with their flag.

All three knots initially headed away from Delaware Bay in a NNW direction, the normal direction that birds go when leaving Delaware Bay, they then flew to James Bay where they stayed for 1,9 and 12 days, before flying on to their breeding areas, one at Southampton Island, one at King

William Island, and one that was too far north to determine. The first bird began to head south on 13 August, the other two followed within a week. The first knot stopped at James Bay on the way south to the east coast of the USA, another flew to the coast direct from Southampton Island, 2700km. The remaining bird stopped in Hudson Bay before flying direct to the Lesser Antilles, a flight of at least 5,100km. There it was joined by one of the birds from the east coast, the other flew directly to the north coast of Brazil. All three birds used the northern coast of Brazil, one wintered approximately where it originally landed, near the border of Maranhao and Para, one moved to its non-breeding grounds, only 700km to the east, still on Brazil's north coast, and the final bird moved further south, spending its non breeding season in Northern Patagonia.

One birds geocator failed on the non-breeding grounds the other two began to move north again in April and May. The most dramatic flight was approximately 8000km, 6 days non-stop from the area around the border of Uruguay and Brazil to North Carolina, the second bird flew direct from Brazil to Delaware Bay, a

flight of 6,700km.

Surprising factors included all three birds stopping at James Bay, and two birds stopping in the Lesser Antilles, neither site thought to be a major stopping point for knots. This may have been a function of the weather that year, with unusual low temperatures on the northern migration and tropical storms on the southern migration. All three of the tracked knots wintered away from the main non-breeding grounds for red knots in South America. Finally, to date this is the longest record flight of any sub-species of Red Knot.

The authors stress that while the use of these geolocators gives more detail than has previously been available, the data on this population is at this point only three birds. Not too many conclusions should yet be drawn about the subspecies as a whole.

Read more of the story online

The paper can be found at www.waderstudygroup.org/pubs/wsgbull/v117i2/117_123a.pdf

The press release at:

www.whsrn.org/sites/default/files/file/Red_Knot_geocator_press_rel_-_Manomet_10_09-23a.pdf. 

AGM and nominations for Council

The Annual General Meeting of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust will be held at the Shorebird Centre on May 23rd 2010 at 10 am.

Nominations are called for the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor and 10 Council members. Please have your nominations with the Secretary, Will Perry, by the eighth of May. His address is on the inside of the back cover of this magazine. Your letter should have the name of the person you are nominating, your name and the name of someone to second the nomination. Everyone involved must be financial members of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust.

AGM Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Minutes of the last AGM 23/05/10

Matter Arising from the minutes

Chairman's Report

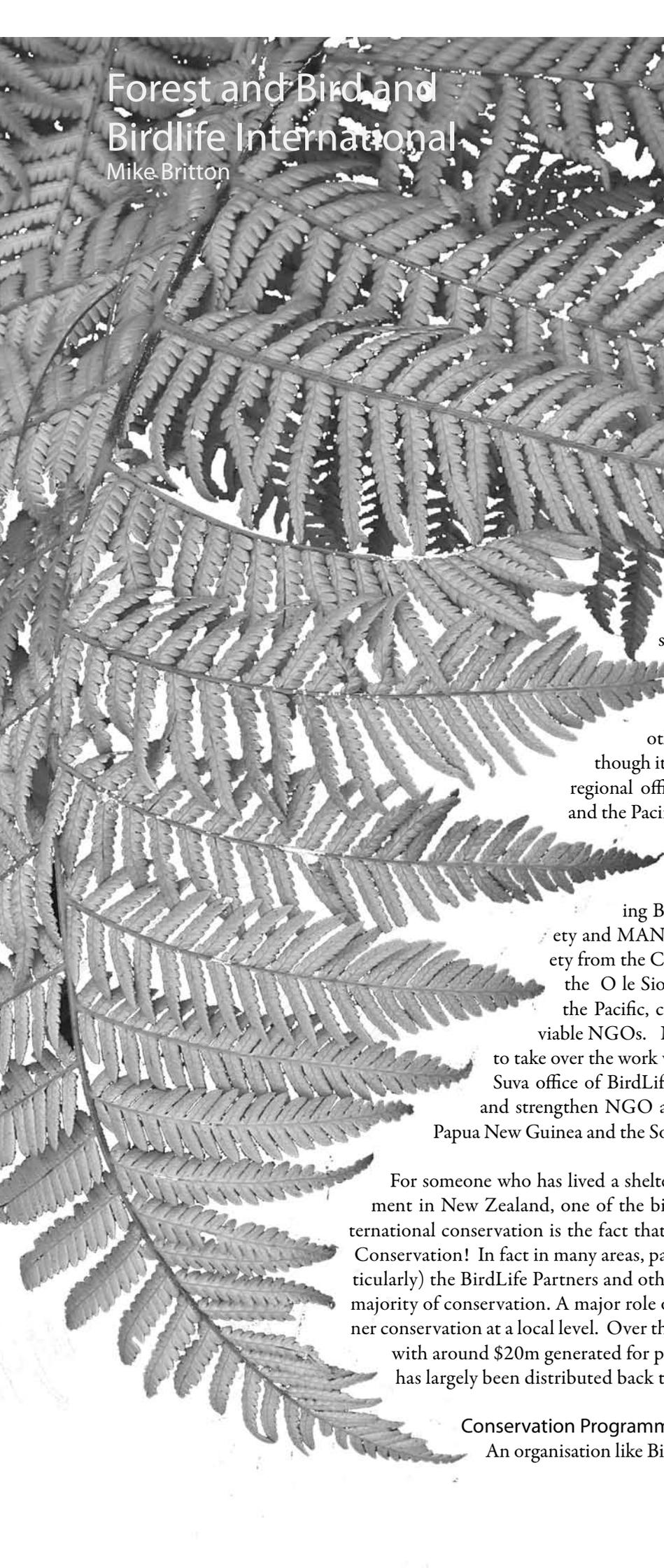
Treasurer's Report

Election of Officers

(Treasurer, Secretary Auditor, 10 Council Members)

Subscriptions for the year ending 31/12/2012

General Business 



Forest and Bird and Birdlife International

Mike Britton

Forest & Bird is the New Zealand partner of Birdlife International. What is Birdlife, what does it do and what relevance has it for birds and nature in New Zealand? And how can we all make a difference? Birdlife International is the world's largest partnership of conservation and environmental

non government organisations. Interestingly, BirdLife is not a bird fancier organisation but is primarily about the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats. Of the member organisations, approximately half have a focus on birds, but the other half is more like Forest & Bird with a broader conservation mandate. Even those organisations which have a bird focus, for example like the United Kingdom's RSPB, are moving quite significantly towards accepting wider UK and International conservation focus.

BirdLife is quite unlike the majority of other major environmental NGOs in that, although it has a head office in Cambridge, England and regional offices in Africa, Americas, Asia, Middle East and the Pacific, it is a member based organisation.

Forest & Bird is part of the Pacific region with the other partners and associates being Birds Australia, the Palau Conservation Society and MANU from French Polynesia, Te Ipukarea Society from the Cook Islands, SCO from New Caledonia, and the O le Siosiomaga Society in Samoa. In other parts of the Pacific, country programmes are helping to establish viable NGOs. Nature Fiji the most advanced and is starting to take over the work which had previously been carried out by the Suva office of BirdLife. Work is ongoing to develop programmes and strengthen NGO activity in Tonga and Melanesia particularly Papua New Guinea and the Solomons.

For someone who has lived a sheltered life involved in protected area management in New Zealand, one of the biggest surprises in getting involved with international conservation is the fact that all countries do not have a Department of Conservation! In fact in many areas, particularly in developing countries, it is (particularly) the BirdLife Partners and other NGOs and voluntary groups who do the majority of conservation. A major role of BirdLife is to raise funds to support Partner conservation at a local level. Over the years it has become increasingly successful with around \$20m generated for project work in the last twelve months which has largely been distributed back to Partners to facilitate conservation work.

Conservation Programmes

An organisation like BirdLife has to fundraise to survive. To attract

support, BirdLife has developed a number of over-arching programmes into which most of its conservation projects fit. These are the Global Seabird Programme; Preventing Extinctions, (which include finding species guardians and species champions; climate change; Flyways (or Born to Travel, which includes focus on three main areas – the African-Eurasian flyway, the Americas flyway and the East Asian-Australasian flyway); Forests of Hope and the Important Bird Area programme (IBAs).

Forests of Hope

The objective of Forests of Hope is to bring together and build on successful forest conservation and management programmes throughout the tropics. The initial aim is by 2015 to provide biodiversity protection for more than 5 million hectares. It is hoped to demonstrate new legal, governance and sustainable financing models and also to build BirdLife financing capacity in forests and climate protection. A lot of this work is being done by some of the big partners such as RSPB, NABU (Germany) VBN (Netherlands) and working with local partners in countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia and South America. A fourth objective of the Forests of Hope programme is to influence climate change mitigation and adaptation policies to ensure conservation restoration of natural forests. One of the most exciting projects under this programme is the protection of the Harapin forest of 100,000 hectares in Java being jointly undertaken by Birdlife, RSPB and the local partner, Burung Indonesia .

The big problem, however, is funds. How does an NGO organisation come up with the sort of funds necessary to, not only protect forest habitat, but also provide a livelihood for local people?

A new idea is being tried for Harapin with the involvement of Singapore Airlines. The concept is that the companies – starting with Singapore

Airlines – invest in the Forests of Hope Endowment Fund, the income of which would be used to acquire the management rights of large areas and to pay for the management. The aim is to generate revenues for the long term management of forest conservation. It is also to provide resources to protect tropical forests at a very crucial time when, until a regulated carbon market is established, millions of hectares of forests are threatened with clearance and conversion. Because the money remains in the capital fund, when the project ends or the term of the loan is over, it can theoretically be paid back. But the longer term option which interests Singapore Airlines is when that market is in place, it could convert the investment into carbon credits. There are several banks interested in managing the fund and the intention is to build it to over \$US30million. The minimum investment will be \$US3million and each investor will have an exclusive access to future carbon credits of the area their money is protecting proportional to their investment. This is potentially one way where significant amounts of money could become available for conservation and protection programmes.

Important Bird Areas

The international IBA programme is one of the most significant for Birdlife International and, perhaps in New Zealand, one of the more controversial. It is obvious that if you are to protect birds and other biodiversity then first you must identify where the important populations are so that you can focus your conservation effort on those places. For IBAs the distribution of key bird species defines the key sites and where discrete areas of habitat can be delineated and at least potentially managed for conservation. Currently 10,000 IBAs have been identified worldwide with a global coverage of freshwater and terrestrial environments nearly complete – one major exception being terrestrial New Zealand.

Four categories of criteria are used to identify IBA's consistently worldwide. These are based on two main considerations used in planning site networks for biodiversity - conservation threat and irreplaceability.

IBA documentation and identification is led by the BirdLife partner although in some areas BirdLife International and some of the bigger partners give a significant helping hand. The IBA programme allows the identification of networks in the wider landscape and this is particularly the case of migrant species which need particular sites along the flyways at all stages of their annual cycle.

International Collaboration, such as the Wings over Wetlands (WOW) programme for the African-Eurasian water birds, is vital to achieve this.

IBA's are also identified across oceans where the boundaries of coastal breeding and roosting sites are being extended to include foraging areas. This has been the first focus for Forest & Bird where we are shortly to publish the first edition of the New Zealand Marine IBAs. Hot on the heels of that will be the coastal IBAs for sea birds and then we hope to move onto terrestrial areas.

Evidence shows that IBA networks are disproportionately important for other animals and plants and they are effectively a first cut at the overall network of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) which identify the most significant sites for biodiversity conservation worldwide. That also highlights gaps in protected areas network programming and IBA information is extremely important to factor in the implementation of international agreements. For the Ramsar Convention, IBA identification criteria are closely aligned with those used to select wetlands of international importance. IBAs that potentially qualify as Ramsar sites, but

have yet to be designated, can easily be highlighted

IBAs are becoming increasingly significant in looking at adaptation to climate change and in many countries and regions, such as Africa, Governments have adapted IBA monitoring as a means of measuring the impact of climate change on local biodiversity. The recent Biodiversity conference at Nagoya made some decisions on the criteria for the identification of sites of global biodiversity and conservation significance, drawing a lot on the work of Birdlife and recognising IBA's as one of the key indicators of biodiversity importance.

IBAs and New Zealand

In Europe, because of the EU Wild Bird directive, IBAs can be designated as specially protected areas. But in other areas what purpose do they serve – particularly in a country like New Zealand which has an extensive protected area network? And within Forest & Bird, (and other bird interested organisations,) there has been considerable discussion about the relevance and suitability of the IBA

criteria in New Zealand, not without some justification. However, these are internationally accepted criteria and therefore are meaningful internationally and in relation to international agreements. In getting recognition for our indigenous biodiversity and potentially getting overseas funding, IBAs could play a major role. The objective of the IBA programme is not to identify where birds are but rather to provide protection for the birds and their habitat. It is also to monitor the success of that protection. In the United States the Audubon Society was reluctant to adopt the IBA programme. Now having embraced it, particularly at a regional level, its Chapters are adopting IBA areas, taking responsibility for their protection and their monitoring.

In New Zealand we are lucky to have a Department of Conservation and it is putting in place its own systems for monitoring species. The benefit of this new DOC system is that it can assist with the identification of IBAs thus bringing New Zealand into the worldwide IBA programme. Having identified IBA sites will en-

able Forest & Bird (and hopefully other partners) to look to the protection or better management of those areas identified. We expect, like in the US, that Forest & Bird branches and other local groups will pick up on the protection and monitoring of IBAs in their area.

Subject to funds being available, Forest & Bird is proposing to begin identification of terrestrial IBA areas over the next twelve months. In future we hope to continue on beyond birds, to cover other species, picking up on the wider theme of key biodiversity areas.

Nature Partnerships

It is interesting that in New Zealand there has always been an argument about what is necessary, which agency has done what and what is most important. Some organisations like the Ornithological Society focus on surveys and data collection, while the sanctuary groups and other local conservation groups' work on particular projects, areas or restorations. Forest & Bird members and branches work at a local level too, but also promote environmental and conservation protection at a political level, with opinion leaders and in the wider community. Since its establishment in 1923 Forest & Bird has been a key player in the establishment of new national parks and reserves, has been the applicant for more marine reserves than any other organisation and has played a major role in significant campaigns like Save Manapouri, protecting indigenous forests, the creation of the Department of Conservation, and achieving World Heritage Status for South West New Zealand and New Zealand's sub Antarctic islands. It is the only conservation organisation that is active in resource management planning and consent applications right across the country. Through its branches and field officers it makes submissions at a local level and where necessary to protect nature, takes matters through to the Environment Court and even

BirdLife maintains information on all globally identified Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Below is a summary of the information we maintain as at the 16th March 2010. Totals exclude those IBAs that are yet to be confirmed, and the bird records include only confirmed species populations that trigger one or more IBA criterion threshold. The total area is a minimum as for a small number of IBAs no area data are available. Source <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/info/ibaglobalsum>

Region	Number IBAs	Total Area (km ²)	Number bird records
Africa	1,217	2,205,066	33,424
Antarctica	25	6,961	182
Asia	2,343	2,423,594	10,770
Australasia	344	445,193	2,440
Caribbean	282	46,460	3,208
Central America	154	169,222	2,156
Central Asia	384	372,018	3,594
Europe	3,649	1,135,616	25,374
Middle East	388	274,310	2,773
North America	548	498,912	1,890
Oceania	27	4,871	357
South America	1,087	2,179,849	19,747
Total	10,448	9,762,073	105,915

beyond.

Forest & Bird does not do these things alone. There are only limited resources available for conservation in this country and a limited number of people with the expertise, skill, time and passion to be involved in conservation and nature protection. The global economic crisis has meant that in areas such as the United Kingdom and the USA, the amount of money available from central and local government for conservation is not just being flat lined but rather is facing major cuts; in some cases as high as 40%. What this means is that a huge amount of pressure is going on volunteers to pick up the work no longer able to be done by professional staff and also to raise money and contribute to the cost of conservation. The situation is not so bad in New Zealand but the DOC is facing cuts and is being focussed by Government direction.

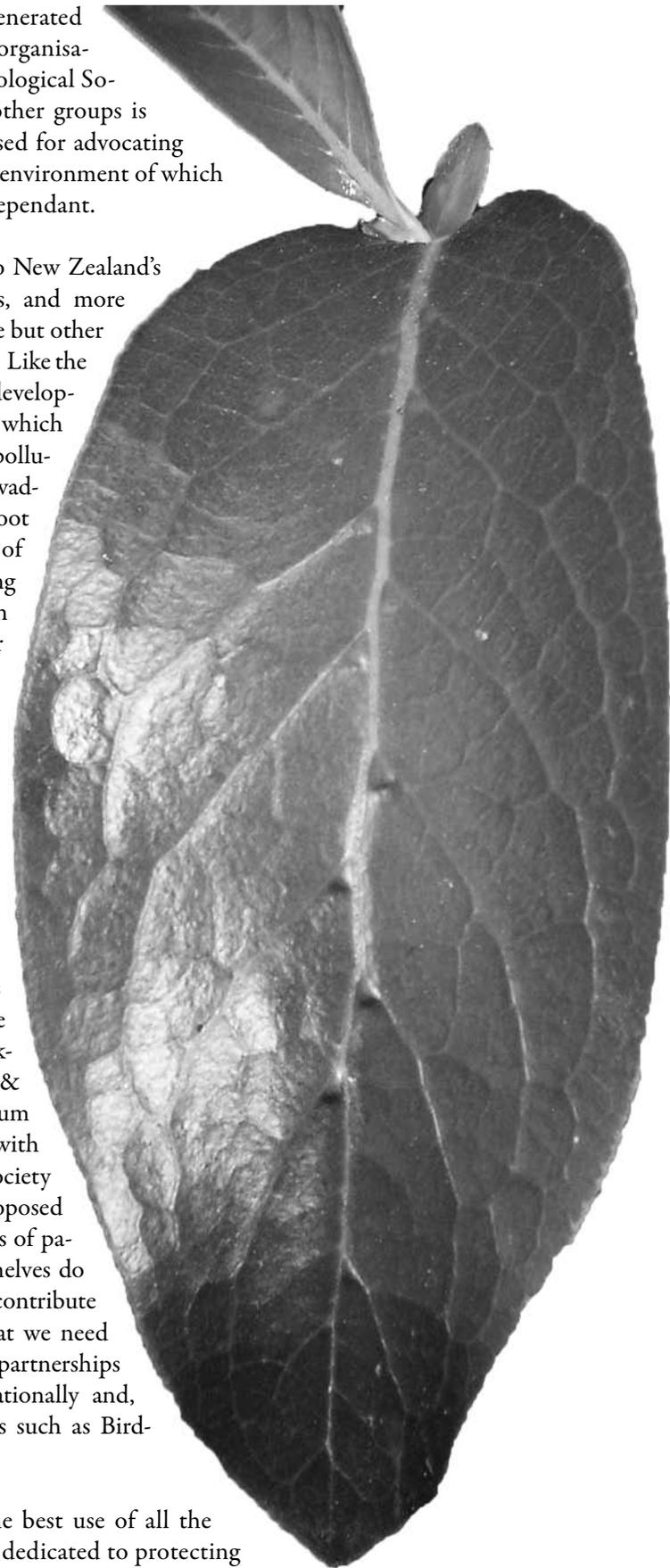
Traditional campaigning for increasing government spending on conservation is increasingly being ignored. Conservation groups are going to have to look at different options including things such as new market instruments and the role of business in conservation. We are also going to need to promote to the wider community that good environmental and conservation management is not a cost but just as much an investment in the future as any other infrastructure expenditure that we might make.

One can argue about the relative merit and importance of what each organisation contributes - from the local conservation group through to national organisations like Miranda, the Wetland Trust, the Ornithological Society and Forest & Bird. But in the end we all have our strengths and together we are much more effective than working alone. There is no point counting birds if all you are doing is recording their eventual demise. It is essential that the

knowledge that is generated through the work of organisations like the Ornithological Society, Miranda and other groups is taken forward and used for advocating the protection of the environment of which those species are so dependant.

The biggest threats to New Zealand's birds are pests, pests, and more pests. That is still true but other things are also critical. Like the impact of agriculture development and irrigation which is a cause of coastal pollution which affects wading birds and is the root cause for the spread of mangroves. Damming rivers and irrigation results in lower water levels and so nesting populations around the braided river systems are much more vulnerable to pests - not to mention the odd 4WD. If we are going to make a difference, and see our birds and other native plants and animals survive and prosper, we can only do it by working together. Forest & Bird has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ornithological Society and one is being proposed with Miranda but bits of paper lost on files on shelves do not in themselves contribute to conservation. What we need to do is build active partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and, through organisations such as Bird-life, internationally.

We need to make the best use of all the resources and people dedicated to protecting nature. That is a commitment Forest & Bird is making to work in partnership with other organisations. To the extent we can, we want to use our resources to support those key groups working with us. We know there has been history in the past and some passionate people do hold strong views but let's really start to work together, collaborate and jointly promote conservation and nature at this time of crisis. 



BirdLife International – a Pacific Partnership for birds and people.

Jeremy Bird

BirdLife International has a global mandate to work through its many and diverse national Partners and Affiliates to deliver measurable conservation successes on the ground. From our regional secretariat based in Fiji echoes of the conservation challenges and successes in New Zealand resonate throughout the Pacific. These are apparent



in the people; from the staff we have working here today, back in time to the pattern of human settlement with an historic wave of colonisation by Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian people followed by a subsequent wave of European settlers. We also see similarities with New Zealand on a daily basis in the threats to birds and biodiversity we are trying to tackle; namely the spread of alien invasive species associated with human movements.



Important Bird Areas have now been identified in many parts of the Pacific, including most recently Samoa, to conserve key sites for birds and biodiversity.
© BirdLife International

The 25,000 islands of the Pacific support arguably the most threatened avifauna on Earth (or earth and sea in our case) with about one quarter of the World's 192 Critically Endangered birds occurring in the region. Invasive species have driven past extinctions – too numerous and heart-wrenching to list here – and continue to represent the most significant threat to our terrestrial biodiversity. This is particularly true of our most threatened shorebird, the Vulnerable Bristle-thighed Curlew, whose approximately 10,000 individuals all fan out from their breeding grounds in Alaska to winter (summer) throughout the islands of the tropical Pacific during their non-breeding season. They are the only species of shorebird known to

become flightless during their post-breeding moult; at this time they are highly vulnerable and predation by introduced mammalian predators on remote islands of the Pacific has precipitated a rapid and alarming population decline. While this may seem on some levels to be a sad and unfortunate evolutionary oversight, their ability to migrate certainly isn't, and one can only marvel at their ability to find their way, time and again, to remote specks of land amid a vast ocean of blue. As we try to improve the fortunes of Curlews and other birds across the Pacific we are pleased to have secured a 2 million Euro grant from the European Union to advance and expand our programme of work on alien eradications, island restoration and biosecurity.

Invasive species certainly represent a

focus for us, but are by no means the only theme on which we are working. Here is a taster of some of the projects BirdLife and our Partners are involved in....

Important Bird Areas in Samoa

Samoa has become the latest country in the region to complete a programme of work to identify Important Bird Areas (IBAs) – a global programme of work implemented by

BirdLife's Partners to define key sites for conservation using agreed criteria relating to threatened species, range- or habitat-restricted species and key congregations of shorebirds, wildfowl and seabirds. Six sites have been confirmed, five on Upolu and a sixth on Savaii which is three times the area of the five Upolu sites combined. The assessment was conducted through a partnership between Ole Sio'sio'maga Society (OLSSI, BirdLife in Samoa), Conservation International, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, BirdLife International and Cedric Schuster of Pacific Environment Consultants Ltd who compiled the final inventory, supported by the OLSSI steering committee. The IBAs support Samoa's most vulnerable species, such as Tooth-billed Pigeon, Mao, Samoan White-eye and the possi-

bly extinct Samoan Moorhen. The sites overlap to a large extent with Conservation International's Key Biodiversity Areas. For the IBA programmes, the next steps are to raise community awareness about the importance of the sites, to identify benefits to the community from the sites and to monitor the sites to identify both short-term and medium-term threats.

Fiji's comic-book heroes of conservation

Children attending schools around Fiji's Mount Nabukelevu IBA are to become the conservationists of the future, with help of a BirdLife project backed by the local and national government, and supported by the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund.

Mount Nabukelevu is one of two IBAs (Important Bird Areas) on the island of Kadavu, and its montane forest is of critical importance for five Globally Threatened bird species: White-throated Storm-petrel and Crimson Shining Parrot (both Vulnerable), and Collared Petrel, Whistling Dove and Kadavu Fantail (all Near Threatened). But unsustainable practices are causing degradation of agricultural areas, leading to further pressure to clear more forest.

BirdLife initiated conservation activities at Mount Nabukelevu in 2005, working with the local communities to identify problems, define potential solutions and develop appropriate skills. This has led to the establishment of a Site Support Group (SSG), comprising representatives of land-owning mataqalis (family units), who want to manage their forest resources sustainably. The Mount Nabukelevu SSG is establishing a community-based protected area of around 350ha at 300m elevation. Recent grants from the GEF Small Grants Programme and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund will allow reforestation down to 250m or even 200m elevation,

which will increase the forested area significantly. The SSG is also managing a model farm and nursery, which was established to initiate a forest restoration programme and to help communities to implement sustainable agricultural practices.

Now the Mount Nabukelevu SSG wants to involve young people, and particularly school children, in their conservation efforts. "We want to ensure that these kids will be the 'conservationists of the future' and that next generations will also be able to enjoy and benefit from our natural environment and resources", said BirdLife Conservation Officer, Tuverea Tuamoto, the project's manager. Educational tools aimed at the children of Kadavu will include a cheap but robust and child-friendly pocket guide to Kadavu's birds, and a comic strip with information about the value of forests, ecosystems, birds and biodiversity in an easily accessible form. Both will be published in the local language. The comic will describe practical alternatives to the practices currently degrading Kadavu's forests, including the importance of sustainable management for soil conservation, food security, water quality, climate change, biodiversity and non-timber forest products. The guide and the comic will be distributed to all the primary schools in Kadavu. There will be a one-week eco-camp during the term break, complete with games, bird identification training, quizzes and nature walks for the children of the three primary schools in the Mount Nabukelevu area. The eco-camp will also launch a tree-planting programme focusing on the degraded areas of the forest, which will then be taken up by the children of the three schools. Nature clubs and school-based nature programmes will be set up at each of the schools. These activities will be rolled out to other schools on the island if further funding can be obtained.

BirdLife brings PEP to the Pacific

Globally, one in eight bird species is threatened with extinction, including 192 which are Critically Endangered. The Pacific region hosts 44 (23%) of the most threatened bird species in the world. The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership is working together in an innovative programme to prevent any more species going extinct, through the BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme (PEP).

PEP is a global programme incorporating all of BirdLife's work on threatened species. It builds on two new communities: Species Guardians –the people and organisations best placed to carry out the necessary conservation work; and Species Champions – individuals, institutions and companies who are financially supporting the conservation action of the Species Guardians. In the Pacific, Species Guardians have been appointed for five Critically Endangered (CR) species: in French Polynesia, SOP-Manu (BirdLife in French Polynesia) has become the Species Guardian for Polynesian Ground-dove, Fatu Hiva Monarch, Tahiti Monarch and Tuamotu Kingfisher; while in Fiji, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti is the Species Guardian for Fiji Petrel. Conservation action is being implemented for these five CR species, funded by the British Birdwatching Fair, the BirdLife International Community Conservation Fund, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, among others. However, more species still need Guardians, and Champions!

Polynesian Megapodes in dire straits

The Tonga Community Development Trust (TCDT), in association with the World Pheasant Association and the Tonga Ministry for the Environment and Climate Change, recently completed the first survey since 1993 of the Endangered Polynesian Megapode, locally known as Malau, on the island of Niufo'ou



Above: Helicopters were used to broadcast poison bait in order to remove invasive alien rodents from the Ringgold Islands. Seabird populations are already showing the first positive signs of recovery following the eradication in 2008. © BirdLife International.

Below:: The Preventing Extinctions Programme is directing funding and conservation actions to support the most threatened species in the Pacific like Polynesian Ground-dove and Tuamotu Kingfisher. © BirdLife International/www.rarebirdyearbook.com.



in Tonga. Early indications are of a substantial decline. Only ten nesting burrows at seven sites across the island remain active – there were 27 nests at 13 sites in the early 1990s. Possible causes of the decline include predation of chicks and egg-laying females by feral cats and/or impact of feral pigs on both feeding areas and potential nesting sites. Alternatively, geothermal activity may have changed, resulting in reduced egg survival. The tradition of egg-harvesting by the local communities has declined in recent years, suggesting that this is unlikely to be causing current rates of declines.

Next steps are urgently being discussed with local communities, as any conservation action will be dependent on their involvement.

The Magnificent Seven (rat free Fijian islands)

Two years after the BirdLife International Fiji Programme implemented an operation to eradicate rats from the Ringgold Islands, all seven islands have been confirmed rodent-free. Early monitoring also shows that the birds, people and wider wildlife of these remote islands are already benefitting from the removal of these invasive pests. BirdLife staff are continuing to work with local people to ensure the rats don't return.

Located to the northeast of Taveuni, Fiji, the Ringgold Islands hold internationally important numbers of nesting seabirds. Seabird populations here, as elsewhere in the Pacific, were suffering because of rats, which eat eggs and nestlings. The Ringgolds are also an important source of natural resources and income for the islands' landowners. In August 2008, the BirdLife Fiji programme began working closely with the two landowning clans, Yavusa Naqelelevu and Mataqali Qilo, to eradicate the rats. A specially formulated rodent bait was dropped on the islands from a helicopter.

Among the positive changes recorded since 2008 Bridled Terns have been observed for two of the seven islands. This species was not previously known in the area, and its appearance is a promising sign that birds vulnerable to the impacts of rats will establish breeding colonies. In mid-November 2010, BirdLife's Fiji team led a survey of the Ringgold Islands. Colonies of Lesser Frigatebird, Black Noddy and Brown Booby were recorded. These populations represent over 1% of the global number for each species, and qualify the island group as an IBA. In addition, nationally significant numbers of Red-footed Booby, Brown Noddy, Common White Tern, and the globally Vulnerable Bristle-thighed Curlew were also present. Significant numbers of turtle nests were recorded on three islands and skink activity had also increased, particularly the Pacific Black Skink, which is listed under Fiji's Endangered and Protected Species Act. The eradication programme was only the first step in keeping these islands free of rats and other foreign pests. Biosecurity plans have been developed for all the islands, and village representatives have been trained in techniques to prevent the introduction of alien species. "BirdLife urges all visitors to these islands to check their boats and equipment for stow-away rats prior to departure", said Mr Sialisi Rasalato, BirdLife Fiji pro-

gramme Conservation Officer. "The introduction of just one pregnant rat would be enough to undo all the hard work, and set the clock back to a time where the islands were crawling with rats." Sia Rasalato added that the BirdLife International Fiji programme is grateful to the two land owning clans for their support. "Without this, the eradication and the islands' ongoing pest free status would not have been possible."

In association with the landowning communities, BirdLife has established a Site Support Group – the Ringgold Seabird Committee – to lead the islands' management, communicate the results of the eradication, and champion the islands' protection among the wider communities. The seven islands are traditionally under the District (tikina) of Laucala. Mr Tevita Mereti of Naqelelevu village thanked BirdLife International Fiji programme for eradicating rats off the islands, as they were damaging the islands unique biodiversity, and ruining their plantation crops and food stores. He urged fishermen and others who may visit the islands to check their boats and equipment for possible stowaways. "It has taken years of preparation and work to get rid of rats; a careless visitor could bring it back in a day, so we ask visitors to be especially careful" concluded Mr Mereti. 

Websites to Check Out

Interesting Insects and other Invertebrates,

<http://nzacfactsheets.landcareresearch.co.nz/Index.html>

The new internet factsheets, Interesting Insects and other Invertebrates, are now available online. Learn all about Pururi Moths and the Pohutakawa Leaf Miner!

Shorebird Literature Collection

<http://worldwaders.org/index.php?modul=resources>

A currently small but still expanding collection of published articles on shorebirds, including one on the taxonomy of NZ Snipe.

The Global Flyway Network report of the field work in Bohai Bay, Northern China during April and May 2010 is now up on the GFN website.

www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au/ 

Keep up-to-date with events
visit
www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz



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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.

Situated on the Firth of Thames between Kaiawa and the Miranda Hot Pools, the Miranda Shorebird Centre provides a base for birders right where the birds are. 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. Drop in to investigate, or come and stay a night or two.

Accommodation

The Shorebird Centre has bunkrooms for hire and two self-contained flats:

Per bunk / night member \$ 20.00 Per bed / night non-member \$ 25.00

Hire of flat member \$ 65.00 Hire of flat non-member \$ 85.00

(first two people, additional people charged at bunk rate)

Linen and towel hire - \$ 5.00 per person

For further information contact the Shorebird Centre, RD3 Pokeno 2473

Phone /Fax (09) 232 2781 Email: shorebird@farmside.co.nz

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

Membership of the Trust entitles you to:

Four Miranda News issues per year.

A discount on overnight accommodation

Invitations to Trust Events

The right to attend the AGM

Membership Rates :

Ordinary Member - \$ 40.00

Family Member - \$ 50.00

Overseas Member- \$ 50.00

Life Member, under 50 - \$ 1200

Want to be involved?

Friends of Miranda

A volunteer group which helps look after the Shorebird Centre. If you'd like to help out contact Keith. Helping out can be anything from assisting with the shop, school groups or meeting people down at the shellbanks. Regular days for volunteer training are held. Contact Maria for details.

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.

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.

Contribute to the Magazine

If you've got something you've written, a piece of research, a poem or a great photo send it in to MNT News. If you want to discuss your ideas contact Gillian Vaughan, gillianv@actrix.co.nz.

Help in the Miranda Garden

While our formal gardening program has ceased if you do have some spare time while around the Centre please feel free to do any garden maintenance you can see needs doing!

Become the Editor

This one's not always on the list but if you are looking to be in the middle of the information loop and take on a bigger role in the Trust then MNT News is looking for a new editor. Contact Keith or Gillian if you'd like to discuss the details.

