



WE'RE BACK!

New Zealand Fledglings

The NZ Young Birders Magazine

August 2023

Young Birders NZ are Back! (and bigger than ever!)

The Young Birders NZ team would like to proudly announce that we are back up and running! To explain why we are back, you need to understand why we were gone.

The original Young Birders team that used to run this magazine and website ended up growing up and most of them moved on from birds and birdwatching.

However, we have finally come to replace them! Our team consists of ten different young people around the country who all have one common passion: Birds

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Recent Birding Events:

Winter Wader Census

Ōtaki and Waitohu Winter Bird Count

On Thursday the 13th of July, Saul, Alfie and Ari headed down to the Ōtaki Estuary to count all the birds on the Kapiti Coast estuaries. After taking note of the species at the Ōtaki Estuary and Katihiku Estuary, they biked on to the Waitohu Estuary, and recorded the birds there as well. Overall, it was a great day out birding! Thanks to Saul for organising this amazing wader count. There were a total of 29 species +2 hybrids seen, the highlight being the Pied Stilt x Black Stilt hybrid. Here is a link to the New Zealand Bird Atlas Trip Report-<https://ebird.org/atlasnz/tripreport/144795>



Pied Stilt x Black Stilt hybrid C2 Node, Waitohu Estuary - Photo © Saul Ward

Birds NZ Conference, 2-5th June

The Birds NZ Conference went ahead in Taranaki. Visitors were treated with great scientific bird presentations, speakers and, best of all, the guided field trips! The most popular of these was the Rotokare Scenic Reserve trip where birders saw a variety of species; Pāteke, Tīeke, Hihi, Mātātā and many other natives! Other trips spotted a Black-fronted Tern, 10 Cape Barren Geese, 6 Dabchick and two offshore White-capped Mollymawk.



Peter Fryer Opening Conference, Taranaki - Photo © Michael Szabo

Birds NZ local meetings

In your local area each month there will be a Birds NZ meeting. Each of these will often have speakers come in and talk about an interesting topic. These range from bird surveys to common bird-natter. To find out how you can join these meetings go online to: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/> to find out more.



Tomtit

One of New Zealand's lesser-known Bush Birds



SPECIFICATIONS:

BIRD ORDER

Passeriformes

TE REO NAME

Miromiro

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Petroica macrocephala

BIRD FAMILY

Petroicidae

FOUND WHERE

New Zealand

LENGTH

13 cm

WEIGHT

11 g

NEW ZEALAND STATUS

Endemic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not Threatened

The tomtit is a bush and shrubland songbird which can be found all over New Zealand. They are insectivores, but they also feed on nectar and fruits. Tomtits have an agile flight and cheerful song which they use to communicate and defend their territories. They are quite curious and confiding little birds which can get quite close!

HABITAT

The tomtit thrives in habitats like forests, woodlands and shrublands. It likes areas with lots of vegetation, diverse trees and abundant insect prey.

BEHAVIOUR

An active and agile bird, frequently seen hopping and flitting among branches. This bird is known for its inquisitive nature, territoriality and melodious song.

DID YOU KNOW?

The tomtit has a unique hunting technique. It performs a behaviour called "tail wagging," where it flicks its tail from side to side to flush out insects from hiding places, make them easier to catch!

Black-Billed Gull Rescue!

When I went seawatching for gannets at Waikuku Beach, I thought I might have been able to see gannets. I didn't. But what I did find might have been rarer: An endangered Black-billed Gull that was injured on the beach, and there were a lot of dogs around, so I dropped everything to rescue it.

Rescuing a Gull

The gull had a broken right wing (like most countries), so it couldn't fly, and after a long chase in the water, I managed to grab it carefully so as not to injure it further.

There was a bit of a problem though: my phone's battery was dead.

Luckily, birding at the estuary happened to be Eleanor Gunby, one of the original Young Birders, and she called the DOC hotline and after nearly an hour of the gull flapping and biting, DOC finally arrived to pick up the gull.

Checking Up

I found out that the gull had gone to South Island Wildlife Hospital, the main bird rescue centre in Christchurch, so after about a week, I decided to go.

After a bus trip, I had arrived and immediately found another bird that had been rescued: a Silvereye that seemed quite recovered.

Eventually I found the Black-billed Gull, who was recovering quite quickly and was being taken care of well. It was an effort of many people to save the gull.

As I was about to leave, I heard a Little Penguin, one of the most common patients, who would have most likely been from Banks Peninsula. This wildlife hospital helps a wide variety of species, as there was also a kiwi in a dark box (probably a Great Spotted).

Seeing as this charity helps so many species, I decided to donate as much as I could to it (5 dollars).



Black-billed Gull after being rescued. © Christian Cosgrove



Black-billed Gull at South Island Wildlife Hospital. © Christian Cosgrove

How To Go Birding: For Beginners

Birdwatching, also known as birding, is a really fun and interesting hobby. Whether you're a professional ornithologist or just a casual person interested in birds, anyone can birdwatch! This guide will explain how to go birdwatching and it's a lot easier than it seems.

Equipment And What You Might Need:

Before you step out and go birdwatching, you might want to bring some stuff with you. A pair of binoculars or a telescope are always a good idea. It is also recommended that you bring a bird guide or some sort of identification book that can help you recognise what birds you see. Also remember to wear appropriate clothing that suits the habitat and places you will be visiting.

Where To Go Birding:

Some areas are better than others when you're looking for birds. When looking for a specific bird, it's often best to find their preferred habitat. Parks, nature reserves, beaches, estuaries and forests are some of the best places to go birding! Birds are most active in the day but some can only be found at night.

How To Birdwatch:

Birdwatching takes a lot of patience. It is important to be respectful to the birds in their environment and always stay safe. When near the coast, beware of tides. Look out for birds, as they are all around you. Birds will be found in any location from your own backyard to the tallest peaks. Birding can be done almost anywhere, and is a very rewarding hobby.

How To Identify The Birds:

When you first start birding, all birds might look the same to you! That's completely fine and part of the learning process. Try to compare the bird that you see to your guide and look for any defining features that might set that bird apart. Colour, feathers, beak, feet and all these other features can help you identify which species it is.

Recording What You Have Seen:

Keeping a bird watching journal or checklist that you can use to record what you have seen is a good idea. We recommend that you use the New Zealand Bird Atlas, which is an online website that you can submit your sightings into. You can also take photos and record calls of your birds as well!



By: Alfie, Saul and Samuel - Photo © Samuel Amaris

Avian Influenza, The H5N1 Virus.

A bird flu called H5N1 is a deadly disease which spreads among birds and some mammals.

It started reaching the news on the 31st July 2022. The outlook is grim, with only two continents without reported cases: Antarctica and Oceania.

The latest reports show that it is raging around South America, with 200,000 recorded deaths in Peru. More than 40% of the Peruvian Pelican population died over a period of a few weeks in the early months of 2023. More than 100,000 boobies have died and an additional 85,000 cormorants.

Although bird viruses don't usually affect people, there have been some rare cases of human infection. If you happen to find a dead or injured seabird whilst on a beach stroll, the best thing to do is NOT touch it! Even if the bird is not infected with H5N1, it can still carry germs and other diseases. Instead, you can call DOC (if you believe the bird is still alive) or if it's dead, try to identify what bird it was.

Overall, don't be scared! If you want to learn more about the virus and updates we suggest going to these websites (they will provide you with reliable facts and updates):
CDC - The Centers for Disease Control has all the information you need to know about Bird Flu:

www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm

WHO - The World Health Organization has an article about the ongoing H5N1 virus:

www.who.int/news/item/12-07-2023-ongoing-avian-influenza-outbreaks-in-animals-pose-risk-to-humans



Red-footed Booby, Muriwai © Caiden Binzegger

By Samuel, Saul and Alfie

BIRD OF THE CENTURY 2023

Every year Forest and Bird runs a competition called Bird of the Year. And this year Forest and Bird are celebrating 100 years with Bird of the Century! We have picked out 5 underdogs that we think should take the crown! These are our top 5 choices and we urge you to vote for them too. All of these birds are endangered and facing extinction. Voting for these birds will help raise awareness for their plight and hopefully bring them back from the brink. So help out a species in need!

Southern NZ dotterel/Tuturiwhatu

Southern New Zealand Dotterel breed above the tree line on Stewart Island/Rakiura. These amazing birds feed on coastal estuaries on the Stewart Island and Southland coastline. In recent years the Southern New Zealand Dotterel has decreased in numbers significantly because of cats preying on their chicks, eggs and adults on their nests in the Rakiura mountains where they breed. With only 126 birds remaining they are now the world's most endangered wader. Last year their population was 144 birds but after a horrible breeding season they lost around 30 birds to cats. We strongly insist that you should vote Southern New Zealand Dotterel for your first choice this BOTY 2023. Their numbers are going down in a steep decline and currently no plans are in place to help these little guys. Not to be dramatic, but for these dotterels it's life or death.



Southern New Zealand Dotterel, Awarua Bay © Oscar Thomas

Antipodean albatross/Toroa

The Antipodean albatross is one of the largest seabirds in the world, with a wingspan of up to 3 metres! It is in rapid decline, especially the males. The Antipodean Albatross is endemic to New Zealand. When on land, they inhabit tussock grasslands with high winds and few trees. Sadly, the water where the female Antipodean albatross feeds is directly linked to where there are long line fishing vessels. The albatross sees the fish and dive for it but finds out there's a hidden hook that keeps them under the water until they drown. The population is standing at around 2,600 birds but if the fishing vessels don't stop drowning and decrease their food supply which means they will have to go further for food. At the current population decline the population will sadly be down to 400 birds by 2050 with most being males.



Antipodean Albatross, Southland © Oscar Thomas

Grey duck/Parera

Grey Duck are a duck species native to New Zealand, Australia and several other Pacific Islands. New Zealand has its own endemic subspecies, but unfortunately they are becoming extremely rare. In recent years the numbers have declined massively due to intensive hybridisation with the introduced Mallard. Only 8% of



pure Grey Ducks remain, with most Grey Duck sightings across the country being Hybrids. Only 22% of Mallards in New Zealand are Pure Mallard and the rest, about 70% are Hybrids.

Grey Duck, Mangere © Oscar Thomas

Fiordland-crested Penguin/Tawaki

The Fiordland-crested penguin is one of four endemic penguins in New Zealand, only breeding along the West Coast, Southland and Rakiura/Stewart Island. The Tawaki is unique in that it's the only penguin in the world to live in rainforests. With only 2,500-3,000 breeding pairs left and depending on the ocean for food, the Tawaki could easily get wiped out if the sea temperatures rise too much or the food supply is destroyed.



Tawaki, Anchor island © Oscar Thomas

Wrybill/Ngutu Pare

The Wrybill is the only bird in the world that has a beak curving to the side! Only around 5000 of these unique birds remain. Their beaks have evolved for getting under small rocks to eat bugs, as they only breed along the braided riverbeds of Canterbury and Otago (which have a lot of rocks!) They lay their first eggs from September onwards, and by Christmas they start heading north. By January thousands are heading up, passing through areas like Lake Ellesmere. Soon large flocks arrive in the North Island. They land in areas as south as Foxton and as north as Cape Reinga. The largest flocks in winter are generally the Miranda and Manukau Harbour flocks, where thousands gather.



Wrybill, Ashley Estuary © Ben Ackerley

By Ben, Samuel, Saul, Lauren, Alfie and Caiden

Kawhia Wader Census

By Caiden



I recently got to take part in the Kawhia Harbour Wader Census. Here's a little report:

Splash! Feet penetrated the water as they jumped off the boat. The soft trills of a Wrybill and a few New Zealand Dotterel filled the calm air as they hopped around. The salty air was blown through by a light breeze.

The shapes of five figures with scopes, binoculars and cameras trekked across the island. Shells crunched under their boots. The distinctive silhouettes and call of a pair of Variable Oystercatcher flying by filled the sky. And suddenly a Whimbrel burst into the sky.

The Whimbrel flew around, swooping low across the water by the Black Swans. It flew up and disappeared out towards the open ocean. The birders set their scopes down and started scanning.

Thousands upon thousands of Oystercatchers crammed together. Gulls popped their head out of the flock, curious about the visitors. The 380 Banded Dotterel and 410 Bar-tailed Godwit jumped around, avoiding the annoying New Zealand Dotterel racing about. A Reef Heron darkened the cheerful white shellbank and the black and white stilts lightened the mudflats.

The tide rose up, and slowly moved back down. Soon the flocks of waders burst into the air, off to feed around the harbour. Chattering calls filled the air. And the five birders were left on the shellbank, alone.

Little Egret Influx

What is a Little Egret?

This year there has been a large influx of Little Egrets across New Zealand! These are a normally rare bird that is common throughout Australia. There are often one or two birds popping up in places throughout New Zealand each year, but so far this year 20 have been reported across the country! Birders have started calling it 'The Influx'. This is happening because Australia is having a drought cycle followed by a wet cycle.

Now inland wetlands are drying up causing the birds to fly south to the coast.

Some individuals may get blown off course by wind, or just wander across the Tasman sea to Aotearoa's coast. This may also be why the South Island has had more sightings than the North Island, which is usually the other way around.



How to identify a Little Egret:

Little Egret can look quite similar to some of the slightly more common birds. When you see what you think is one, make sure you rule out these similar species. The bird you see might be a Kotuku, a Cattle Egret or even the very rare Plumed Egret! The first step should normally be checking the beak. If it has a slim, dark grey beak then that means it can't be a Cattle Egret, or a non breeding plumage Kotuku and means it could be a Little Egret. Next, look for yellow soles on the birds feet and a yellow gape at the base of the bill. These are distinctive features for the Little Egret. Also look at the size. Kotuku are huge and Little Egrets are about the same size as a White-faced Heron.

Where have they been seen so far?

North Island:

Northland: Kaimaumau, Mangawhai Estuary

Auckland: Pahurehure Inlet

Manawatu-Wanganui: Manawatu Estuary, Ohau Estuary

Wellington: Waikanae Estuary

South Island:

Tasman: Dovedale

Canterbury: Ashley Estuary, Heathcote Estuary, Ferrymead Park, Lake Forsyth (x3), Lake Ellesmere at Jarvis Rd

Otago: Hawksbury Lagoon

West Coast: Lake Moeraki, Saltwater Lagoon (x2), Karamea Estuary

Southland: Lake Te Anau, Waipapa Point, Oban

By Ben, Saul and Caiden

Travis Wetland/Ōruapaeroa

Location Review

Travis Wetland/Ōruapaeroa is an excellent place to go birding if you are a beginner or if you are an experienced birder, with a large variety of birds from bitterns and crakes to just plain Mallards.

Located around Marihau, Frosts and Travis roads, this wetland is very significant to Christchurch conservation being the largest wetland in Christchurch.

Travis Wetland has lots to explore being home to lots of birds, it has a walking track around the perimeter with two bird hides for you to watch birds from, a viewing platform and plenty of seats for you to sit and enjoy the views of the wetland.

If you are walking around the wetland and see a group of volunteers, please take your time to stop and give them a big thank you because they have put in so much hard work to keep the wetland maintained and to plant trees and shrubs.

So if you are a birder, or even not a birder, and you want to get outside, go to Travis Wetland. You will not regret it.



Grey Teal, Travis Wetland © Lauren McCauley

By Lauren

The Story of the Kākāpō

For the first time in nearly forty years, Kākāpō have been introduced to the mainland! Four male birds were taken across from Codfish Island and introduced into Maungatautari Sanctuary on July 19th. This is a huge step towards preserving this species!

Back in 1995, the Kākāpō numbers hit an all time low of only 51 remaining. DOC quickly went into action, organising the National Kākāpō Team. They worked away, caring for the Kākāpō and soon three private offshore islands had Kākāpō introduced to them. But then, just as they thought they had succeeded, a huge wave of a deadly disease, known as Aspergillosis, swept through.

This disease knocked back the numbers, 21 birds were affected badly, and unfortunately 9 died. Still, the National Kākāpō Team fought their way through and now we have a population of roughly 248 birds.

Though the Kākāpō may be flightless, they are amazing climbers. This meant that before introducing them to the mainland, they needed a way to keep the Kākāpō from escaping the predator-free zones. The normal predator-proof fence wasn't working, but after some testing they finally found a solution!

Maungatautari is already planning on trying to release 6 more birds by the end of the year! This gives a great opportunity for birders and bird photographers to have a chance to see these adorable flightless parrots in the wild. So next time you pass through the Southern Waikato you will know where to stop!

By Saul and Caiden



Kakapo, Anchor Island © Oscar Thomas

New Zealand Bird Atlas

The Final Year

The New Zealand Bird Atlas is a useful and popular bird-monitoring project. It is completely citizen science based, meaning anyone can help out! This project is the third atlas and the first this decade. It will be a treasure chest of information in the years. But unfortunately, all good things must come to an end, and we now only have one year to go.

Your sightings count, even if there's only one year to go. 1458 observers have come together, spotting 300 species and submitting 352,000 complete checklists! So let's come together and make sure the largest Atlas ever counts!

Go online to <https://ebird.org/atlasnz/home> and submit some checklists!

By Saul and Caiden



Little-Pied Shag, Waikanae Estuary © Saul Ward

YOUNG BIRDERS DRAWING COMPETITION



Calling all fellow young birders! We are hosting a drawing competition. If you want to show off your creativity to a group of like-minded people then you're at the right place! It doesn't matter if you have been an artist for years or if you've never drawn a bird before.

Each issue we will pick a bird for you to draw for the competition. This month we have picked the charming **Tomtit!** You can learn more about these little guys in the fact file we made about them on page 3.

Rules:

- Maximum of two entries per person,
- Entries must be sent in by October 25th,
- Artwork must contain a Tomtit or it's nest/eggs,
- You have to have been the main artist,
- But, most importantly, have fun!

Please email your drawings to: youngbirdersnewzealand@gmail.com
The winner(s) will get shouted out in an upcoming magazine issue!



Samuel Amaris



Lauren McCauley



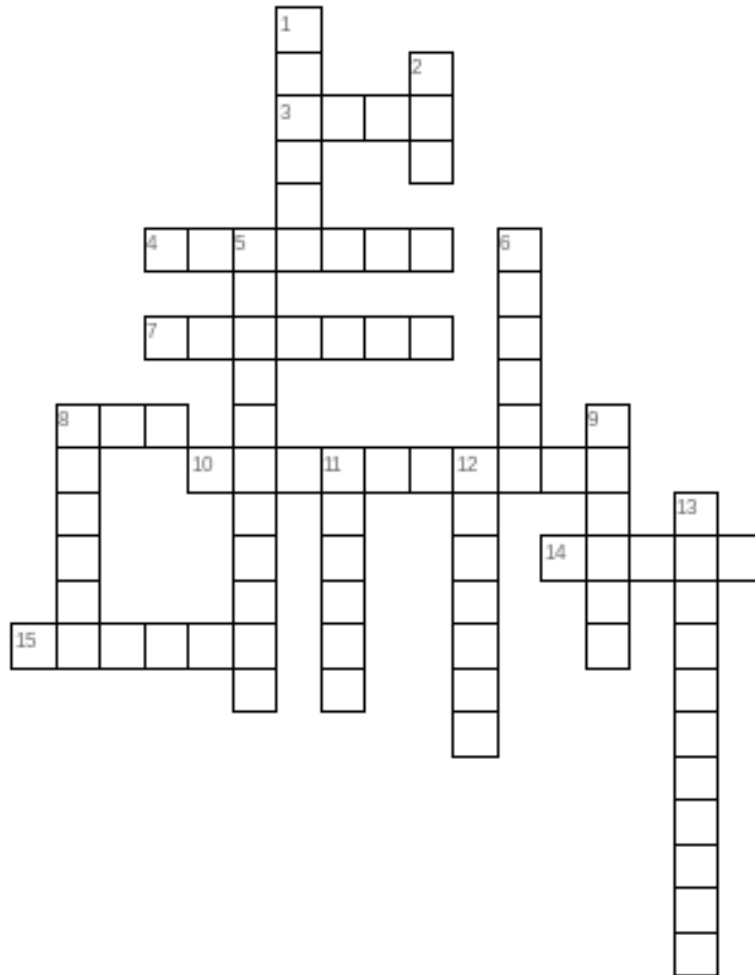
Alfie Benbow

By Saul, Lauren, Alfie, Ari, Caiden and Samuel

New Zealand Birds and their Habitats Crossword:

New Zealand Birds and their Habitat's Crossword

Birds and their Habitat's New Zealand Crossword, Bird names in English and Māori



Across

- 3 Likes Pig
- 4 Coastal
- 7 'Bogged in'
- 8 Mischevious, Likes Mountains
- 10 It can cool you down
- 14 Large Wingspan
- 15 Fly's long distances

Down

- 1 White apron
- 2 Boisterous
- 5 Orange breasted, Rakiura
- 6 Hybridisation
- 8 Ground Owl
- 9 Treetops
- 11 'The air is thin up here'
- 12 Curved bill
- 13 Leaf Litter

The answers will be out next edition!

By Saul

Meet the Team!



New Zealand Fantail © Samuel Amaris

Abraham Reid

Hello, my name is Abraham, Abe for short. I am 14 years old and live in New Brighton, Christchurch. I love going for walks with my family, tramping, and most importantly, birding. I have been birding for just over a year now and love photographing the wildlife at my local wetland, Travis Wetland/Ōruapaeroa. My favourite bird is by far the Yellow-eyed penguin/Hoiho.

Alfie Benbow

Hi, I'm Alfie. I am a 13 year-old birder from Wellington and have an interest in tramping, football, but most importantly: BIRDS. I have been into birding for a while now, and my favourite bird is definitely the Kakapo. I live at home with my parents, siblings, a cat, a dog, and a rabbit. If you would like to contact me, my email is alfiebenbownz@gmail.com and feel free to follow me on Instagram at [alfieb770](https://www.instagram.com/alfieb770).

Ari Ward

Hi, my name is Ari Ward, I am from The Kāpiti Coast. I am the youngest of the lot here. This group is such a great thing to have in New Zealand especially as we are all young people and that is what makes us great friends! (Saul being my brother so I don't count him) We all have stuff in common, we are pretty much spread across the country (But are mostly in Ōtautahi Christchurch).

Ben Ackerley

Kia ora, I'm Ben. I'm a 14 year old young birder and photographer who lives in Ōtautahi (Christchurch). I mostly bird around Waitaha (Canterbury) but love to get out of my zone and bird in other regions of Aotearoa. My favourite birds at the moment are Waders. Contact me at bellbird568@gmail.com and feel free to follow me on instagram at [Bellbird_ben](https://www.instagram.com/Bellbird_ben)

Caiden Binzegger

Hi, I'm Caiden! I'm a 12 year old birder from Waikato. I love all species of birds but my favourite is currently Tui but the New Zealand Falcon swoops into a close second. I also enjoy other aspects of nature, filming, editing, biking and tramping. See you out there birding!

Christian Cosgrove

Hi, I'm Christian. I'm a 14 year old birder and photographer from the Waimakariri District (north of Christchurch). I've campaigned for the Paradise Shelduck in Bird of the Year twice.

Lauren McCauley

Kia Ora, I'm Lauren. I am 12 years old and live in Christchurch with my brother, mum, dad and two budgies. I have been interested in birds for as long as I can remember and most people know me for my strange passion for these adorable creatures. My overall favourite is the Kākāpō with Southern Royal Albatross and Yellow-Eyed Penguin as the runners up.

Samuel Amaris

Hiya, I'm Samuel. I'm a 15 year old photographer and birder based in Christchurch (Ōtautahi). I love birds but also enjoy rowing, debating, academic competitions and more. I am also the editor and author of 'Wrybill' the Canterbury, Birds New Zealand newsletter. Oh and my favourite bird is the Kea! Email me at: samuellarisphotography@gmail.com or follow me on instagram: [samuellarisphotography](https://www.instagram.com/samuellarisphotography)

Saul Ward

Kia Ora, I'm Saul. A Young Birder and Photographer based in Ōtaki on the Kāpiti Coast. I love using my patch going to new places. I have been into birds for a very long time. I have been birding regularly since 2020 and have never looked back. I am also interested in Cycling and Tramping. My Favourite Birds are Wrybill/Ngutu Pare, Caspian Tern/Taranui with the Runners up being Rock Wren/Piwauwau and Kākāpō

Zion Cooper

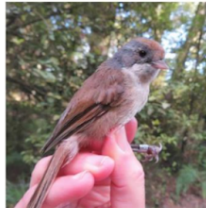
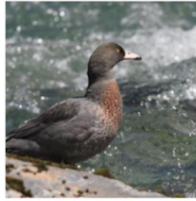
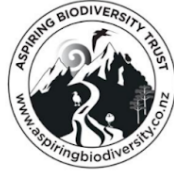
Kia Ora, I'm Zion. I'm a 15 year old nature photographer and birdwatcher from Christchurch. Right from a young age I have loved the natural world but it was a trip to South Africa that sparked my interest in birds. My favourite NZ bird is currently the Karearea/NZ Falcon but in an hour it will no doubt change! You can find me at zioncooper.com or [@zioncooperphotography](https://www.instagram.com/zioncooperphotography) on Instagram.



Red-crowned Parakeet, Tiritiri Matangi © Zion Cooper

Makarora Field Camp for Young Birders
(14 - 18 years)
8 – 13 January 2024

Led by Aspiring Biodiversity Trust with Birds New Zealand,
based at Makarora near the head of Lake Wānaka



- Learn about wrybill/ngutuparore, black-fronted tern/tarapirohe, black-billed gull/ tarapuka, banded dotterel/pohowera breeding on the braided river. The nearby beech/podocarp forest provides habitat for pīpī, mohua, kākā, ruru. Remnant populations of rock wren/pīwauwau, kea and whio live in the alpine areas.
- Take part in mist-netting, bird banding, 5 minute bird counts, predator control, river-bird survey, bat and moth surveys, and more!
- Learn about geophysiography, biodiversity monitoring and threat management from practising experts.

Include this unique birding experience in your summer holidays!

Cost \$450 per person.

Accommodation in cabins and meals catered. To register your interest and obtain further details, email info@aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz

Please share this news with any young birders/nature enthusiasts who may be interested.



New Zealand Dotterel © Zion Cooper

Cover Photo, *Welcome Swallow Juvenile* © Caiden Binzegger

Thank you for reading Fledglings Issue No.1, 2023.
Magazine Printed August 2023

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