

OBITUARY



Jenny Hawkins
[Jennifer Mary Hawkins]
(1931 - 1996)

Jenny didn't really get into birds until her own family had grown up and "fledged the nest". She was encouraged by the then Regional Representative Frank Boyce, and when he left the Nelson area, Jenny took over the role. Later she was elected to Council and served as the Society's representative on the Department of Conservation's Banding Committee.

Jenny was interested in all birds but especially seabirds and waders. [She was also very interested in people especially the young ones]. The first was developed during many of the trips out into Tasman Bay when she accompanied her husband Brian on his fishing trips (at the time he was a commercial fisherman). She also developed a long time interest in the birds nesting on the Boulder Bank. She carried out a banding study on the white-fronted terns and with the help from other local members monitored the nesting of the black-backed gulls over many years.

Perhaps her greatest ornithological love was waders and Farewell Spit. She began by being involved in some of the Society's field courses there, invariably ending up as quartermaster, but was soon organising the official wader counts. These did not satisfy her inquiring mind and she later organised extra trips to try to fill in those missing pieces to wader migration and behaviour. She took the opportunity while visiting her daughter in Perth to travel on to Broome to work with the Australian Wader group, netting and banding migrating waders at Roebuck Bay (from the Broome Bird Observatory).

Jenny's greatest contribution was in helping to organise and run official and semiofficial ornithological projects, AGMs, young member field courses, banding study weekends, shearwater transfer programmes etc. Many members will be grateful to Jenny for providing them the opportunity to visit the Spit. Her name became synonymous with Farewell Spit and many will remember "the wisp of a woman" battling the wind and sand. We will recall "her lunch" at about 9am while waiting for the incoming birds and her advice such as "if you go with Brian Bell you will get your feet wet". Throughout most of her trips she was helped by her band of loyal local members, especially her "lieutenants" Henk Heinekemp and Willie Cook. These two returned some of Jenny's ashes to her beloved Spit to drift up and down at the whim of the wind.

I will remember Jenny as a mother to her own family and grandchildren and to all those young people she worked with. To my family she was always "Mummy Hawkins", an endearing name which was acquired at the Spit and Maud Island where she literally mothered the young ones and always continued to take a deep interest in their development and achievements.

Jenny also made a significant contribution to Conservation being at one time or another on Nelson Forest Parks Board, Nelson Walkways Committee, Fauna Protection Advisory Council and the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board.

All who knew her will miss her enthusiasm and generosity. We are grateful for the hospitality that she and Brian offered to all ornithologists at their home. We extend to Brian and family the sympathy and condolences of all members.

Brian D. Bell