

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand's Website: the launch into cyberspace

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During discussion at last years combined Regional Representative and Council meetings, the Society's presence (or lack of it) on the World Wide Web was discussed. It was decided that the Society should establish a Website over the next year, and I was given this task. This last year has seen the establishment and registration of 2 internet addresses, and the creation of a Society Website, which was launched on 1 June 2000. A presentation and overview of the site will be given.

The address for this Website is

<http://osnz.org.nz>

Another site will be set up at

<http://bird.org.nz>

This first site is the 'Home' of the Society, the second will contain more informal information regarding birds and bird watching in New Zealand. Both sights will eventually contain an exhaustive 'Links' page, which will link with other bird-oriented sights around the world. Input from members is welcomed and encouraged and should be directed to the above email address.

The rainbow lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) problem in New Zealand

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Rainbow lorikeets (*Trichoglossus haematodus*) are widely distributed in Australasia. They are brightly colored and strongly gregarious parrots that feed primarily on nectar and pollen. They also consume a number of cultivated crops. Like most parrots they nest in hollow trees. They are prolific with pairs known to rear up to three successive broods in a single season.

A feral population of rainbow lorikeets has been established after a North Shore resident illegally (not authorized under the New Zealand Wildlife Act 1953) and deliberately released significant numbers of captive birds. The birds have been supported with feeding and additional infusions from captive stock. Birds have now

been recorded in flocks around the wider Auckland area and appear to have bred in the wild. The feral population is currently estimated to be 150-200 birds.

Australian evidence supported by our observations and reports from members of the public is that these birds are aggressive to and often dominate all other birds trying to use the same food source. Rainbow lorikeets have the potential to impact negatively on endemic species through competition for food (with tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*), bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*) and hihi (*Notiomystis cincta*)) and nesting sites (kakariki (*Cyanoramphus* sp.), kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*), hihi and New Zealand endemic mammals short- and long-tailed

bats (*Mystacina tuberculata* and *Chalinolobus tuberculatus*). Rainbow lorikeets are strong flyers (Higgins 1999) and dispersal over water to sensitive offshore island habitats (3.5-24 km from the mainland) does not appear to be a barrier. Many of the species at threat from competition with Rainbow lorikeets have limited dispersal abilities and find water a significant barrier to movement.

Recent reports from South Australia suggest that rainbow lorikeets are quickly developing as the principal

pest of commercial orchards (Lamont 2000). Local residents on the North Shore already report damage to their fruit trees from the birds. Should they be left to establish a population in the wild they would have an economic impact on NZ horticulture industry.

Rainbow lorikeets in the wild have been declared an "Unwanted Organism" under the Biosecurity Act 1993. The Department of Conservation has now initiated a live capture eradication program aimed at removing all of the lorikeets from the wild.

Round the world with the northern royal albatross (*Diomedea sanfordi*)

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Northern royal albatross (*Diomedea sanfordi*) have been tracked from Tairaroa Head and the Chatham Islands in New Zealand during parts of their biennial breeding cycle using satellite PTTs and a prototype data logger. Records analysed total 2620 days (6000 records) and 500 days (75000 records of time, temperature and light) respectively. A PTT attached by harness was successfully deployed and transmitted for 564 days using intermittent transmissions to conserve battery life. Distinctive patterns of behaviour away from the nesting colonies will be demonstrated; short distance foraging over shelf and shelf break while nesting; express dispersal to non-breeding 'holiday' locations in South American waters; 'rest and recreation' over shelf and shelf break; express migratory

return to the breeding location. When not at the nest site, birds are only in flight from 25-50% of the time depending on the behaviour pattern selected. In spite of this, while on migration, point to point progression at the rate of 10 degrees longitude day⁻¹ are common, indicating regular mean flight speeds of over 90 kmh⁻¹. When on migration most flying is in the daytime, but is more often at night while on 'rest and recreation'. The full migratory route demonstrated by transmitters and logger is circumpolar and downwind. The northern royal albatross spends the majority of its feeding life in the EEZs of New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and migratory transition through South African and Australian waters.

Corrigendum

Rare Birds Committee – Combined Report for 1992-1999 *Notornis* 47(1): 64-70.

In record 94/10, the name for the Oriental dotterel should be *Charadrius veredus* and not *Charadrius orientalis*.