

Citation for Reg Cotter

Reg and Anne came to live in Petone over 50 years ago and that was when Reg joined the Ornithological Society. For his interest in nature in general, and birds in particular Reg gives credit to a very good primary school teacher and his encouragement to keep records about the first seasonal sighting of insects, blossoms and birds.

A next key influence and opportunity for Reg was voluntary work involvement with Dr Fredrick-Carl Kinsky, the first Curator of Birds at The Dominion Museum. In 1975 Dr Kinsky needed two helpers for his bird banding initiative on Matiu/Somes Island to add to the knowledge of bird migration, life history and population information. Reg has been going over to Matiu/Somes, Lepper and Makaro/Ward Islands ever since. He has, for example, undertaken weeding and rubbish clearance four times a year on the latter two islands and bird counts on each of them.

The Chathams Island Taiko Trust have recently this year hosted Reg and the seven others members of the team that were involved in finding and then tracking a previous thought extinct Magenta Petrel/Taiko bird. On the 1st January 1978 Reg and the team caught the first Taiko. It was like trying to get permission to look for moas! Reg handled plane bookings, the organisation of food and equipment and whatever was needed – with Anne's help. There are now 15 breeding pairs and 130 to 140 known Taiko on the Chathams.

Also a long time member of Forest and Bird, Reg has taken a major role in the planting of 140,000 trees on Matiu/Somes. Reg has also been a key person in MIRO (Mainland Island Restoration) in Eastbourne. This involved the forming of 91kms of tracks and the establishment and monitoring of bait stations – which Reg did for ten years.

In 2001 Reg was awarded a Department of Conservation (DOC) award for his contribution to conservation. Over the last five years Reg has worked on Matiu/Somes Island managing a penguin study for DOC. Reg has organised the teams of six people at a time to support this study. Over fifty people have been involved. To date there are 240 Penguin nesting boxes plus 160 natural nesting sites in caves and some more in the open that Reg knows of on Matiu/Somes.

These fifty people have also included DOC personnel and Reg has been helping to train them in a quiet way for a long time. He helps them gain confidence and experience in the tricky business of handling and banding birds and in identification details. Reg is a guide and ranger on Matiu/Somes and at weekends also gives the DOC staff on the Island a break. Lots of time is still spent at what Anne calls "his second home."

Reg has been a key part of the very successful dune developments in Petone and involved in various *Keep Petone Beautiful* initiatives as well. In 1997 he received a *Keep Petone Beautiful* award for his work.

It is impossible to record how much this unassuming man has done for our local and national natural habitat. His knowledge and expertise has always been generously shared and he has further generations of his family now involved.

Reg, it is because you have been voluntarily doing so many things that have made a big difference in your local community, across New Zealand and internationally that the Rotary Club of Petone is pleased to award you a Paul Harris Fellow Award.

19th February 2013