

WARM AIR 14 August 2021

Aviation Sports Club Gliding Newsletter

THIS WEEKEND:

www.ascgliding.org

Bank Acct 38-9014-0625483-000

Saturday	Instructing:	Lionel Page
	Towing:	Fletcher McKenzie
	Duty Pilot	Kazik Jasica
Sunday	Instructing:	Ivor Woodfield
	Towing:	Rex Carswell
	Duty Pilot	Joseph Dickson

MEMBERS NEWS

Well last weekend there was finally a Coast Run. The first one in 2 or so years

In Warm Air this Week;

- *Weekend Reports*
- *Weekend Photo Extras*
- **Our Avian Compatriots part 7; More introduced species.** Jonathan Pote
- *Roster*

Weekend Reports

Saturday Instructor Andrew Fletcher Reports

A Coast Day. **EPIC**

100 km of ridge, lift strong enough to support you at well over 100 knots for miles without stopping, so remote you need to fly to see it, rugged, windswept, stunning is the scenery. If you're not excited, reach down and check your pulse 😊. My why, are flights like our very own Coast, it lights my candle, floats my boat, tells me "hey you're living the dream"!

So, I like the Coast then! Saturday 7th August really started for me on Saturday 31st July, I got myself out of bed to an average weather day and decided not to glide today. I sat down with my breakfast in front of the computer looking at Metvuw and the coming week of weather, my eye was immediately drawn to Saturday 7th of August, in particular the isobar pattern, this was without doubt



a coast day in the making! It had been a while since I had flown GKT so a change of mind, I needed to be current in my glider. Off to the club to rig and fly some circuits to make sure I was in good shape.



I was glued to the weather all week watching Saturday's forecast, Ian O'Keefe and I were discussing the plan should Saturday produce the goods. I started charging batteries on Thursday before leaving for work to do a Whangarei overnight. Friday night equalled

more batteries on charge for the aircraft and camera, a firm plan was made with Ray Burns and Ian O'Keefe for the morning.

Saturday morning arrived, Ray Burns, Ian O'Keefe and myself met at the local cafe for breakfast followed by rigging the gliders. A few showers passed through during this time as expected but by 1100 the conditions looked good. Ian launched first, with me not far behind, the tow out to Muriwai was a bit rough to start with but smoothed out at 2500 feet. I was met by Ian just South of Muriwai, once a shower had passed, we were off.



We crossed the Manukau Heads for the first time heading South, the ridge was booming there is no other word for it. I accelerated the Mosquito through to 120 knots selecting full negative flap on the way (top gear 😊). We kept this pace up to Karioitahi flying tight formation at times for photographs and just because we could.

We climbed to cross Port Waikato conversing on the radio, the chatter was good, the day was even better, at 2000 feet after waiting for a shower to pass we crossed. The sun was shining on the coastline, we could see all the way to Raglan. Time to reselect top gear, the scenery along all of the coast is stunning, but this particular stretch is amazing. We ran the ridge at around 300 feet, fast, turning tight around the small peninsulas, it didn't take long to get to Raglan 113 km at an average speed of 93 kph.



Our next turn point was North to Piha, 108 km North. There were showers to dodge, we discussed the best way to negotiate them, so our progress was slower, we turned Piha having averaged 77 kph.

Turn point 3 Karioitahi, 49 km South, the sky looked good after the passage of a shower, so we were back in top gear. Ian was just ahead of me also in top gear, what a run! Average speed 150 kph. We turned in a shower and were both keen to get going North to dry off, finishing turnpoint,



Muriwai 54 km North, there were some showers to hold for but a good run nonetheless, average speed 116 kph.



We contacted Whenuapai tower for a clearance into the zone for the final glide home, climbed to 2500 feet and set off. It was an easy glide, arriving at Whenuapai well above 1000 feet, Ian had the lead, joined left base for runway 26, I followed close behind.

We derigged, parked the trailers and went for a beer, told our storey, the smile said it all, words that don't exist, feelings that can only be expressed by expression. It felt like a dream, but no, pinch yourself, that was no dream, THAT WAS LIVING!



Thanks go to the team on the ground that supported us, Ray Burns, Jonathan Pote, Shivneet Chand, Tony Prentice, thanks for the wing run Shiv, Roy Whitby, the team in the control tower and of course our tow pilot Ruan Heynike. Without you these things can't happen.



More photos further on in the Newsletter and some video at the ASC Gliding Facebook page.

Footnote

We know a few members would like to do this spectacular trip. We are looking at getting another instructor to be rated to conduct the Coast Run who has X-country and current land out experience. Presently Steve Wallace has been our sole instructor and has tirelessly conducted many flights on the coast.

You can on most occasions track these flights on <https://www.gliding.net.nz/tracking> or Flight Radar 24 for interest.

Keep a lookout at those Weather sites to see if there is a strong south westerly winds imminent. Anything blowing 20 – 25 plus knots plus and between 230 – 250 degrees with isolated or no showers is likely to be ideal. We have a list of members who are keen and ready to share this experience in the Twin. But do email the instructors and team to indicate your interest.

Sunday Instructor Peter Thorpe Reports

The Sunday forecast was for showers in the morning turning to rain in the afternoon, so I did not expect much club activity. Jonathan Pote and Alex Michael were waiting for me at the gate, soon followed by tow pilot Gus Cabre, Neville Swan, Tony Prentice and Roy Whitby. The wind was 300/17 on the ground and 290/30 at 2000ft with some low cloud rolling through so we did the usual glider pilot 'stand around and talking' while watching Craig do some work on his trailer and Roy paint some fittings for NF's trailer. Alex was keen to fly so when the cloud lifted, and the rain looked as though it would miss us we asked Base Ops to call the duty controller and set up on vector 26. We got rained on so had to dry the wings of both glider and tow plane but by midday we were ready and after discussing the conditions Alex launched solo in NF. Obviously, there was little lift as he arrived back in the downwind 12 minutes later and lower than usual. He made a good call to turn early and land long commenting later that he had underestimated the effect the wind would have on his ground speed when tracking towards the downwind position. A good lesson learned, and some sound airmanship displayed.

Next up was Jonathan for some dual circuit consolidation. The conditions on tow were certainly boisterous but not beyond the skills of most club pilots. Again, no lift so we were back in the circuit and on the ground in 15 minutes for some bounce recovery practise and a long landing. Jonathan was keen to do another circuit but while we were walking the glider back, the team in the caravan decided they had had enough and packed up before we could get back. They probably did us a favour as the conditions were not really suitable for circuit training and the forecast rain did arrive later in the afternoon. All packed up and home by 1400 hrs. Only two flights but as the saying goes, any flying is better than no flying.

Sad Loss

Most of you will have received the sad news of the passing of Christian Derold a passionate Auckland Gliding Club member while competing in a soaring event in Italy this week.



On behalf of his family, an invitation to Celebrate his Life, will be hosted at the Auckland Gliding Club rooms at Drury on Saturday 21 August at 4pm. If you knew Christian and have not received the invitation sent out by GNZ, please let us know and we will connect you with the details. We extend our thoughts and prayers to his family.

Weekend Photo Extras



Now that JP is doing these articles I am certainly recognising more of the birds. We had to dodge a few on the coast run.

Our Avian Compatriots part 7; More introduced species. Jonathan Pote

To quote Wikipedia yet again, “The appeal of acclimatisation societies in colonies, particularly Australia and New Zealand, was the belief that the local fauna was in some way deficient or impoverished; there was also an element of nostalgia in colonists who desired to see familiar species. An Australian settler, J. Martin, complained in 1830 that the “trees retained their leaves and shed their bark instead, the swans were black, the eagles white, the bees were stingless, some mammals had pockets, others laid eggs, it was warmest on the hills...” It was in Australia that the desire to make the land feel more like England was strongest. The Acclimatisation Society of Victoria was established in 1861. Auckland followed this lead that same year. It seemed like a good idea at the time, and possums, rabbits, stoats and weasels followed as well as the less troublesome birds. The Canterbury Society tried to introduce lions. Thankfully, that project failed, but the introduction of mustelids (stoats, weasels) to control rabbits has been named “A crime committed to try and rectify an error”.

This week the culprits are the Myna, the Australian Magpie, the House Sparrow and the Starling.

Myna (or Mynah) (1870s) (*Acridotheres Tristis*).

The Myna was introduced to South Island from India/Burma in the 1870s, the aim being to cleanse the backs of cattle of parasites, as they did in their native land. The humans got it wrong, as South Island was too cold for the birds’ comfort and they spread inexorably northwards (vanishing from the South Island within three decades) and are now commonest in



Northland and not found south of the National Park. Humans also failed to foresee that the cattle-back pantry was not very bountiful and that the rapidly breeding Mynas would need to quickly find an alternative source of food. Whilst ‘road kill’ insects now provide most of their intake, it did not exist in the 19th century and apart from native fruits, the eggs and young of native birds were very found to be tasty and nutritious. Additionally, many native and endemic species use holes in which to nest. Various parrots in particular use natural holes in trees, whilst the native Kingfishers (Kōtare) laboriously make their own burrow and nesting chamber in clay banks. Mynas have found both sites convenient residences to take over, and the natural tree holes, found almost exclusively in mature native trees, are now quite rare now due to land clearance.

Globally, *Acridotheres Tristis* is very unpopular. In a global survey during 2000, it was declared “The worst invasive bird species” on the planet. Yes, it was equal first with two other species, but of the nearly ten-thousand species world-wide, that is quite an achievement. In 2008 Australia declared it “The most important pest problem” and the epithet of “Flying cane toads” is not a compliment. And yet it arrived here by deliberate introduction. The mind boggles



Their walk is described as cheeky and jaunty. In feeding off road kill, Mynas have developed an uncanny judgement about approaching vehicles. Whilst they do not bother to move as a car passes only feet away at speed, very rarely do they become road kill themselves. It seems they recognise the white line on the left for what it is meant to signify rather better than some human drivers. Their song is usually a rapid medley of raucous gurglings, with chattering and bell like notes less frequent. They are one of the two species Aotearoa bird aficionados would happily see disappear. The other miscreant is next.

Australasian Magpie (1860s) (Makipea) (*Gymnorhina tibicen*)

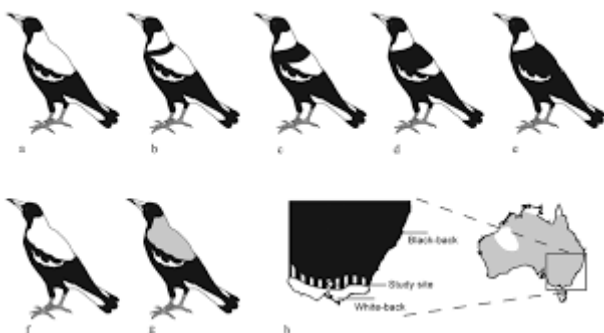
Yet another 1860s arrival, two varieties of Australian Magpies, the white and black-backed variants, were introduced for reasons that elude me and everyone else interested in birds. Their passport was presumably their lovely song, aided by the fact that many Pākehā immigrants in the 19th century had spent time in Australia and loved the bird and its song in its natural ecosystem where it did little harm. The effort to



introduce the species were not trivial – over one thousand specimens were brought to New Zealand between 1864 and 1874, so that it became self-sustaining was not a surprise. The Whenuapai birds are more of the white-backed variant, the black-backed favouring Hawke’s Bay, whilst the species now extends from Cape Rēinga to Bluff. Magpies took to feeding on eggs and chicks, particularly of ground-nesting birds, and have been known to eradicate a species in some areas within a few years. Fortunately the Skylarks at Whenuapai have coped well and flourish.



Their one slightly redeeming feature is indeed their call, a “flute-like carolling”. They also voice what



has been called ‘Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle’. If you are able to interpret some particularly difficult radio calls, it might mean something to you. Their nest is a solid arboreal structure of sticks with a soft lining, and they nest during seven months of the year, an exceptionally long season which must help boost their numbers.

Variations across the species

House Sparrow (Tiu) (1860s) (*Passer Domesticus*)

This species has co-existed with *Homo Sapiens* from the very early days. Once humans “came out of Africa” and started farming in The Fertile Crescent of the Middle East (originally its home) it spread across the world alongside *Homo Sapiens* as human agriculture suited the species perfectly. It was “a gregarious, garrulous and quarrelsome associate” of humanity. At first this was what might be called voluntary accompaniment as humanity spread but more latterly humans have deliberately

introduced the House Sparrow to newly colonised areas as a companion. Māori named it 'Tiu', but this has not caught on (Thankfully, the European name for the endemic Tui – 'Parson Bird' – also fell from use). Welcome addition or not, House Sparrows are quite negative economically, especially by eating ripening corn in the South Island. The adult male has a conspicuously



House Sparrow pair, male on left

black breast, all juveniles looking very similar to the lighter breasted females.

It nests in cavities in our houses, and more recently has been a prime benefactor of nest boxes. The cavity is stuffed with dried vegetation, with a central cavity complete with 'soft furnishings' such as feathers for the eggs and chicks.

Starling (1860s) (Tāringi) (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Starlings were also introduced in the 1860s. Perhaps they were considered to be economically useful or perhaps it was simply a case of nostalgia for 'The Old Country'. Whichever it was, starlings overall are a beneficial addition to Aotearoa as they improve pasture by probing for harmful grubs. Oddly, they are quite closely related to the bothersome Myna. However, they are another additional species competing for insufficient nesting cavities. A Starlings approach to nesting seems to be to find a small hole leading to the largest cavity it is possible to fill with organic debris, as seen in the Starling nest being removed from the MOTAT Avenger's fin.



Not even half-way through the extraction!



Their wings are noticeably 'Delta' shaped (Avian wing platforms will be covered later). The males routinely inspect the nesting cavities for much of the year although eggs are laid only during October. Perhaps keeping an eye on the bach until the summer holiday? There is usually a nest in the chimney of the outdoor BBQ at Matamata over Labour Weekend, the chicks fledging before the BBQ season proper. In an interesting 'Gain of function' (as microbiologists say), the Starling enjoys the nectar of flax, thus

sharing not just the food source with the Tuis but also helping pollinate the flower with its crown feathers at the same time. Starlings roost communally outside their nesting season, flocks in Europe reaching up to two million. That produces an enormous amount of guano which cools their popularity, but the sheer numbers produce wonderful murmurations. Their call is unremarkable – "descending whistle cheeo and a rambling mix of odd sounds"



Starlings have delta wings, especially when gliding

A murmuration of starlings



That is about it as far as birds seen on the airfield is concerned. Next week moves on to evolution or “why did wings evolve when it meant sacrificing the forelimb for something seemingly far less useful until finally proto-wings were prominent enough to enable ‘almost flying’?”

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Duty Roster For Jul, Aug, Sept

Month	Date	Duty Pilot	Instructor	Tow Pilot
Jul	3	G LEYLAND	I WOODFIELD	P THORPE
	4	I O'KEEFE	A FLETCHER	R CARSWELL
	10	M MORAN	S WALLACE	F MCKENZIE
	11	T O'ROURKE	R BURNS	D BELCHER
	17	R BAGCHI	A FLETCHER	R HEYNIKE
	18	T PRENTICE	L PAGE	G CABRE
	24	C BEST	P THORPE	R CARSWELL
	25	E LEAL SCHWENKE	I WOODFIELD	D BELCHER
	31	R MCMILLAN	S WALLACE	P THORPE
Aug	1	A MICHAEL	R BURNS	P EICHLER
	7	R WHITBY	A FLETCHER	R HEYNIKE

	8	C DICKSON	P THORPE	G CABRE
	14	K JASICA	L PAGE	F MCKENZIE
	15	J DICKSON	I WOODFIELD	R CARSWELL
	21	S HAY	S WALLACE	D BELCHER
	22	K BHASHYAM	R BURNS	P EICHLER
	28	K PILLAI	A FLETCHER	R HEYNIKE
	29	G LEYLAND	P THORPE	G CABRE
Sep	4	I O'KEEFE	L PAGE	P THORPE
	5	M MORAN	I WOODFIELD	F MCKENZIE
	11	T O'ROURKE	S WALLACE	R CARSWELL
	12	R BAGCHI	R BURNS	D BELCHER
	18	T PRENTICE	A FLETCHER	P EICHLER
	19	C BEST	P THORPE	R HEYNIKE
	25	E LEAL SCHWENKE	L PAGE	G CABRE
	26	R MCMILLAN	S WALLACE	F MCKENZIE