WFO and Nature Quest present
THE BIRDS OF NEW ZEALAND
November 23 – December 8, 2014
A Fundraising Trip for Western Field Ornithologists

Western Field Ornithologists is offering an exclusive two week birding program to the North and South Islands of New Zealand. Leaders will be Mark Ayre of Nature Quest New Zealand and WFO Board member Kurt Leuschner. They will guide you through the prime birding areas on both the North and South Islands in search of the endemic bird species that call New Zealand home. We expect to encounter 80-85% of the endemic landbird species in addition to a good number of offshore endemics during our two weeks in the field. We will also learn about the ecology and natural history of the areas we will visit. Through our partnership with Nature Quest and the Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, our participation in this program will also contribute directly to the financial success of some of the conservation projects we will visit and learn about as outlined in the itinerary.

We have assembled a carefully thought-out itinerary that makes the most of our two weeks time in New Zealand, giving you the best overview of New Zealand bird life and scenery that one could expect. Travel is by comfortable small coach equipped with an excellent reference library. Accommodation is in pleasant hotels and lodges with private facilities.
There will be a maximum group size of 12 participants and 2 leaders.

**The Birds and Natural History of New Zealand**

Tucked away in the southern rim of the Pacific, New Zealand is a land with an enchanting and refreshing nature. While a morning may be greeted high in majestic mountain valleys, hearing the discreet scuttle of a skink beneath alpine shrubs, the afternoon may be spent on the sea, watching gliding albatrosses and porpoising fur seals. Alternatively one day you may be viewing a pod of Dusky Dolphins and the next you will be hiking in sub-antarctic rain forest. It’s a diverse ever changing land, full of natural spectacles to be enjoyed, challenged, or held in awe.

New Zealand, seen by many as an oceanic “clean, green” paradise, is home to a diverse range of endemic animals and plants. These species evolved without the influence of mammals, during isolation from an ancient southern continent, Gondwana. Many of these species were highly vulnerable to introductions of mammals and other species brought by humans in the last thousand years, and have become extinct or endangered. Conservation of these unique native species and habitats has a strong role in New Zealand’s culture and identity.

While concentrating on birds, wildlife and plant communities, this journey of discovery also enables participants to learn of the special natural features and view the scenically most spectacular corners of this amazing country.

In particular this programme takes you away from the population centres and the tourist ‘honeypots’ to study and enjoy the lesser known but equally spectacular parts of the New Zealand. The magnificent rain forests, dramatic coastline, are particular foci; while we also visit offshore islands such as, Stewart Island to view the iconic but now threatened flightless Kiwi in the wild, and Tiri Tiri Matangi Island a sanctuary for so many of New Zealand’s endangered birds.

The days are ever changing. In the north the emphasis is on the magnificent Kauri and Podocarp rain forests, that once clothed the islands, as seen in such documentaries such as ‘Land of Dinosaurs’; and later on the volcanic and geothermal activity that has shaped and redefined the North Island. Once across Cook Strait on the South Island, our attention turns to the fascinating dramatically different landscapes and biota – range upon range of high mountains, some lush and wet, others stark, dramatic and arid. All are equally spectacular. In between visits to the varied alpine worlds of Mt Ruapehu, Mt Cook and Fiordland there is time to watch and study in awe the albatrosses and marine mammals at Kaikoura and Dunedin. We shall learn of the plight of so many of this country’s birds, discover Kiwi on a remote Stewart Island beach, and view some of the world’s most endangered avifauna, such as the Whio or NZ Blue Duck, Black Stilt, Kokako, plus Fiordland Crested and Yellow Eyed Penguins.
Itinerary (The trip begins in Auckland, NZ on November 25, 2014)

Day 01: Meet Nature Quest New Zealand naturalist at Auckland Airport. Auckland is an area characterised by water, volcanoes and islands. We escape from the bustle of the city to enjoy a gentle introduction to the West Coast, and to watch Australasian Gannets soaring in towards their dotted rock outcrop colonies. White fronted Terns, and Variable Oystercatchers also occur here. A relaxed walk in NZ rainforest will round off our first day, with more widespread NZ
birds such as NZ Fantail, Tuis occurring. Stay at the Hotel Grand Chancellor for two nights. Lunch, and Dinner

Day 02: Tiritiri Matangi is an island sanctuary in the Hauraki Gulf, just north of Auckland. Many of New Zealand’s rare and endangered species now only remain on islands such as this, as the habitat can be protected from the ravages of rats, possums and stoats. Tiritiri Matangi is the site of an ambitious restoration project started 17 years ago, and already the fruits of many people’s efforts are being appreciated by many. We will have a day on this picturesque island to enjoy birdsong in regenerating forest, including that of re-introduced rare species such as the Saddleback, Stitchbird, Whitehead, Red-crowned Parakeet. Also on

Kokako, Tiritiri Matangi

the island are the unique Takahe, and the endangered Brown Teal. Sailing by ferry to the island we may be passed by Australasian Gannets, Fluttering Shearwater, Black Petrel, Cook’s Petrel, and Buller’s Shearwater. Our visit today will contribute directly to further assist in the on-going wildlife conservation of the island. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 03: Within an hour’s drive southeast of Auckland lies Miranda Wildlife Sanctuary, a fine feeding ground for many wading birds, which migrate from the tundra of the arctic regions for the northern winter. Among the thousands of Eastern Bar-tailed Godwits on the shellbanks or silt flats, we may view many Lesser Knots and South Island Pied Oystercatchers, the rare endemic Wrybill, the endangered NZ Dotterel, Far Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, several Sandpipers, Caspian Tern, Little Tern and Sacred Kingfisher. The Warden of the Miranda Naturalist’s Trust will give us a short presentation on the significance of the
sanctuary and the conservation issues faced by many of these shorebirds upon arrival. Later this morning, we travel towards Lake Rotorua, where NZ Dabchick, NZ Scaup, and Little Black Shag are often feeding or roosting. Rotorua is situated in the central plateau of the North Island, a region of much geothermal activity. Stay Taupo tonight. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 04: This morning we have a dawn start, in order to experience the haunting call of the endangered Kokako in its natural, misty rainforest environment. Pureora Forest Park contains one of the finest areas of podocarp forest in the country, as well as a large variety of native invertebrates, like the curious Peripatus, and numerous birds. We will have most of today to gain more insight into the nature and conservation of this special forest, and to enjoy the sounds of the Kaka, Bellbird, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Tomtit, New Zealand Robin, Long-tailed Cuckoo, New Zealand Falcon, Whitehead and Grey Warbler. Later, our day winds up in Tongariro National Park. This afternoon we shall learn of the advances made by the New Zealand Native Forest Restoration Trust. This group began 30 years ago and believes that we must not only halt all logging, but we must also start to put back native forests that should never have been removed. The trust now has 25 reserves and over 6,000 hectares replanted to create wildlife corridors between isolated stands of rain forest. Stay at Ohakune tonight. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 05: A longer day today as we cross to the South Island. This morning head for the tributaries of the Wanganui River to seek out the endangered Whio or NZ Blue Duck. En route to Wellington we shall deviate to the Foxton Estuary with opportunities for Pacific Golden Plover, Royal Spoonbill. Our journey
continues southwards through to Wellington, where we will embark on an evening ferry crossing to the South Island. Three hours, however, is at times not enough for all the wildlife watching to be done! Wandering and Shy Albatross often pass by, as do Giant Petrels, Arctic Skuas, Flesh Footed Shearwaters, Cape Petrel, Common Diving Petrel and Fairy Prion. Towards the entrance to the Marlborough Sounds can often be seen Little Blue Penguins, Spotted Shags, and sometimes dolphins. An evening drive see us heading south down the east coast to Kaikoura, where we will stay for two nights. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 06: Kaikoura is a breath-taking place where snow-iced mountains reach down to a turquoise sea. The continental shelf drops abruptly very close to shore, resulting in upwellings of nutrients from the sea’s depths, attracting a rich and abundant marine life. An excellent opportunity for birdlovers and generalists alike is a seabird excursion, where one can see flocks of cawing albatrosses (4-5 species), and numerous petrels and shearwaters, just metres from the boat. Key species likely to be viewed are Wandering Albatross (Gibsons and Antipodean), Shy Albatross (Salvins and White Capped), Buller’s Albatross, Black browed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, Westland Black Petrel, White Chinned Petrel, Flesh Footed Shearwater, Short Tailed Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater, Hutton’s Shearwater, and Mottled Petrel. In the afternoon we will be at leisure to stroll on Kaikoura Peninsula, or you may opt to go out for a second pelagic, or join a whale watching excursion for Sperm Whales. The peninsula is the site a unique seabird relocation project involving endemic Hutton’s Shearwaters and proving very successful. This afternoon or evening we shall meet representatives of this conservation trust. Breakfast
Day 07: Depart Kaikoura and travel south to cross the Canterbury Plains. Now one of New Zealand’s most intensive agricultural regions the plains run down from the foothills to the central Southern Alps. Cross Burkes Pass. As we wind across the foothills, with snow-capped mountains in the background, we’ll overlook the vivid turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo and other large glacial lakes. Waterfowl likely to be encountered today include Grey Teal, the endemic Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler. Nearby Double Banded Plover are widely dispersed on the braided riverbeds. There will be time for those wishing to take an optional flight over Mount Cook National Park, flying over the highest peaks and glaciers of the Southern Alps, before continuing to Lake Ohau Lodge for two nights. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 08: The braided rivers in this region are the habitat of the endangered Black Stilt, and we will look also for Banded Dotterel (Double Banded Plover) and a range of inland waterfowl. Later today we travel up the Aoraki (Mount Cook National Park). Walk amidst the alpine splendour, search for the rare NZ Falcon, NZ Rifelman, and Brown Creeper, and take further opportunities to look for Black Stilt and Wrybill Plover on their breeding grounds. Return to Lake Ohau. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner
Day 09: Further opportunities to enjoy the inland waders are followed by the drive down to the east coast then Dunedin city. This afternoon visit Penguin Place for Yellow Eyed Penguins then this evening cruise down Otago Harbour to
Taiaroa Head. Here at Taiaroa is the only mainland colony of an albatross species. The Northern Royal Albatross, one of the world's largest flying birds, has a small colony. Just below them is a colony of several thousand Stewart Island Shags and near them smaller colonies of Spotted Shags and Little Pied Shags.

Stay Dunedin tonight. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 10: Depart Dunedin for Invercargill travelling via the Catlins coast. A major seabird recovery project has been initiated in Dunedin by the Forest & Bird Protection Society, NZ's largest conservation group, to try and bring back seven species of seabird that once bred along the Otago coast to the north and south of the city. This morning we shall visit sites associated with this project and learn more of the project objectives and the challenges involved. We shall also stop at Tautuku Estuary for NZ Fernbird. Mid afternoon ferry across to Stewart Island. Evening trip to view Stewart Island Brown Kiwi this evening. Stay South Seas Hotel next two nights. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 11: Day charter at sea and in Paterson Inlet. Our charter vessel will take us around the coast of Stewart Island then out into the Pacific Ocean. Shy Albatross, Sooty Shearwater, Broad Billed Prion, Mottled Petrel, Southern Great Skua, and the rare Yellow Eyed Penguin may be seen before we return to the more sheltered waters of Paterson Inlet. We will search for Fiordland Crested Penguins prior to their departure from the breeding grounds in early December. We land on Ulva Island for excellent viewing of most of the South Island forest birds such as Weka, South island Saddleback, Mohua (Yellowhead), Kaka, Yellow and Red Crowned Parakeets, Brown Creeper. Mid afternoon return to Oban. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Fiordland Crested Penguins, South Westland

Day 12: After an early morning ferry back to Bluff we depart for Fiordland National Park, New Zealand's largest and grandest national park. The landscapes are unrivalled in New Zealand and the Red Beech forests of northern Fiordland are home to an excellent array of forest birds. They are one of the last homes of the Yellowhead, while we may also see a Shining Cuckoo. Stay Te Anau two nights. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner
Day 13: The Upper Hollyford Valley through which the famed Milford Road passes contains superb subalpine herbfields and boulderfields. Weather and snow conditions permitting, we shall spend much of the day here in an area where one of New Zealand's more secretive birds inhabits the boulderfields and cirque basins. They are home to the Rock Wren, not to mention the threatened Kea. There shall be time today for an optional cruise on Milford Sound before returning to Te Anau Downs. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Day 14: (Monday, December 8, 2014) Return across the southern South Island to Dunedin to connect with flight north to Auckland, and to international connection. Breakfast

Accommodations, Physical Demands and Expectations
Rooms will be clean and comfortable throughout the trip. We will stay in a variety of pleasant hotels and lodges with private facilities. The leaders will provide spotting scopes and a birding library for all to enjoy. Expect that most days we will be departing early in the morning as birds are most active at this time. Rest time will occur in the afternoons typically.

Physical exertion will be at the low to moderate level most days. The terrain is mostly flat with some hills. Participants should be in reasonably good physical condition. Any level of fitness can be accommodated, although it is expected participants will be able to walk a minimum of 30 minutes along a track.

Note there are a number of boat excursions on the trip. Layered clothing is preferable as temperatures can vary throughout the day. Rain is possible but not expected most days. Temperatures likely to range from 10-25 degrees Celsius (45-75 F), with wind chill at altitude and particularly on the boat excursions that could make it feel much cooler.

Following program registration, we will provide all participants with a bird list as well as list of important items to bring. The recommended field guide is The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand by Heather and Robertson.
Trip Cost, Terms, and Conditions

NOTE: The actual full cost of this trip will be determined by the US dollar – New Zealand (NZ) dollar exchange rate as of June 25, 2014. Therefore, the actual price may be more or less than that quoted below. All participants will receive email notification on June 26, 2014 of the actual total cost and full payment must be received by July 2, 2014. The price below is based on an assumed exchange rate of 1.25 NZ dollar per 1.0 US dollar. The actual final price will be adjusted up or down based on the ratio of the June 25, 2014 exchange rate (based on X-rate conversion site (http://www.x-rates.com/) vs. the assumed 1.25 rate. See the example calculation at the end of this section.

The cost for the 14 day itinerary is $5200 (US) per person, double occupancy. Should one desire their own room, the single supplement is $900 (US) per person.

A deposit of $700 US (checks payable to “Western Field Ornithologists”), is due within 7 days of registration, which is completed online. The full balance will be due July 2, 2014.

If you do NOT have a roommate but are willing to share accommodations, indicate this when you register and we will do our best to pair you with a roommate and give you the double occupancy rate.

Example Calculations:
- If exchange rate on June 25, 2014 is 1.28 NZ$ per 1.0 US$, total price for registrant at the double occupancy rate would be $5078 US ($5200 x 1.25/1.28).
- If exchange rate on June 25, 2014 is 1.22 NZ$ per 1.0 US$, total price for registrant at the double occupancy rate would be $5328 US ($5200 x 1.25/1.22).

To register for this trip
A WFO News email notice will be sent to alert you to the opening of registration. That message will include the web site address where can register. If you are NOT on the WFO News email list, simply go the WFO web site (www.westernfieldornithologists.org), click on the "Contact" tab (top right of home page), enter your name and email and select "WFO News email signup: Ed Pandolfino", then type in your name, email address, and city and state of residence.

As with all WFO trips, Life and Patron members will have the first opportunity to register. Then all other WFO members. The trip will be opened to non-WFO members only if spots remained unfilled.

Included Items
The price above includes all ground transportation from Auckland, accommodations, meals, guide services, and boat trips as described in the itinerary, tips for guides/driver and naturalists, airport/hotel transfers, some drinks, admission fees, and support to Western Field Ornithologists and to conservation efforts in New Zealand. The group size will be limited to 12 participants and 2 leaders, with plenty of room in our vehicle for everybody.
Not Included
Travel to Auckland, New Zealand and return from Dunedin, New Zealand (see Travel Arrangements below for important details), any optional excursions mentioned in the itinerary, items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, internet fees, bar, restaurant, porter and housekeeping tips, any airport or passport fees, or any other fees not listed in the itinerary.

Cancellation Policy
- Cancellation before Feb 1: receive 90% refund of deposit
- Cancellation Feb 1 or later: no refund on deposit
- Full Payment due July 2 (by check to WFO)
- Cancellation after July 1: no refund unless we can fill your spot, if we fill spot refund all except deposit.
- Cancellation after September 15: no refund

Travel insurance is highly recommended.

Required documentation
A passport valid until at least March 1, 2015 is required for entry into New Zealand. No visa is required for stays of under 30 days and no vaccinations are required.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:
Flights to Auckland, New Zealand
Los Angeles International airport (LAX) will be the departure point for most of us. You will need to depart LAX on Sunday, November 23 in order to arrive in the morning of November 25 (NEED TO ARRIVE BEFORE 11AM), due to the time change. Our tour begins officially when we are picked up from the airport in Auckland, New Zealand on Tuesday, November 25, 2014. Keep this in mind as you book your travel. Most flights arrive in the morning. If you need help booking your travel please call Janice Hanson at Your Travel Agent in Palm Springs @ 760-320-7100. She can also provide information about travel insurance. If you book your own flight please be sure to arrive in Auckland no later than noon on November 25 and set your departure (in the afternoon) from Dunedin on Monday, December 8, 2014.

Return flight from Dunedin to Auckland, New Zealand
The tour officially ends in Dunedin so you will need to book a flight from Dunedin to Auckland in the mid-afternoon on December 8 (most return flights to the US leave Auckland in the evening).

Prices may vary, but as of right now one can fly Air New Zealand from Los Angeles to Auckland (non-stop) and return from Dunedin to Auckland to Los Angeles for less than $1500.
Your Leaders
With 2 leaders for 12 participants, you’ll be well taken care of. Leaders will be able to assist you in any way.

Nature Quest Leader - Mark Ayre

Originally from the UK where he worked as warden on bird reserves, Mark came to NZ some 29 years ago and settled by Lake Wanaka in the heart of the South Island mountains. Mark and his wife, Mary, initially worked at whatever they could to remain in one of New Zealand’s most spectacular regions, and today they are still active in a number of vocations. Mark runs a yacht charter business on the lake, an alternative energy consultancy, and the family run a kennels and cattery, which are situated on their rural property overlooking the Hawea River. A keen birdwatcher for most of his life, Mark has been a leading light the local Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society branch. He is currently branch Chairperson, and is particularly involved in the conservation management of the endangered Mohua (Yellowhead) in valleys near lake Wanaka. Mark has led birding trips for Nature Quest for the past eleven years.
WFO Leader – Kurt Leuschner

A southern California native, Kurt Leuschner currently resides in Palm Desert, California with his wife Candice and three children, Luke, Drake, and Annabelle. He is a Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert, teaching a variety of courses in science and natural history for the past 19 years. He holds a Master’s degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida; his specialties include field ornithology, entomology, desert natural history and tropical ecology. Kurt has been leading and organizing birding and natural history trips all over the United States and the world since 1980, when he began working as an assistant leader for Pandion Nature Tours. After a year studying zoology and Kiswahili at the University of Nairobi and two years serving in Tanzania’s wildlife division with the U.S. Peace Corps, he began taking groups in 1993 to international destinations including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Egypt, Costa Rica, Honduras, Ecuador and Peru. Africa remains a favorite destination with 18 visits to date. In 1996 he became a charter member of the African Bird Club and has been the sole U.S. representative for the ABC ever since. Since 2000, Kurt has been an active member of the Western Field Ornithologists and currently serves on the board of directors and as the acting chair of the field trip committee. In his spare time he researches (and bands) Western Scrub-Jays (Aphelocoma californica) and is beginning a project involving sound recording of this species and other closely-related corvids.