

ANNUAL LOCALITY REPORTS

FIRTH OF THAMES

The Firth of Thames has again been under constant observation, and a further gap in its long alluvial coastline has been filled by Rev. W. M. Garner, who has reported on the south-east corner, Parawai.

PRION (Sp?) — One alive in a Thames garden, 29/5/57.

FLUTTERING SHEARWATER — Big flock milling round off Puru, 24/2/57.

WHITE HERON — One at Thames on 27/5/57.

BLUE HERON — Not recorded for some years on the Miranda coast. One at Thames during June.

WHITE-FACED HERON — Not more than two during the spring at Miranda; five on 9/6/57; six in May at Parawai, but only two seen in June.

ROYAL SPOONBILL — Two at Thames on several occasions between 5/6/57 and 26/6/57.

BLACK SWAN — Nine on 21/1/57; 16 on 21/5/57.

SHOVELER — Three at sea off Miranda on 5/1/57; duck with four flappers on Miranda pools on 20/1/57.

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — The hundreds of winter had decreased to 76 on 9/9/56. There was a further decline to c. 31, of which 15 were at Parawai. After the New Year numbers grew quickly; 111 on 5/1/57; 320 on 20/1/57; c. 600 on 17/2/57; c. 730 on 3/3/57 was the highest count. c. 460 on 3/6/57. At Thames the autumn increase was from 21 on 18/2/57 to 97 on 25/5/57; on 1/10/57, 27 still remained.

N.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — One from 22/12/56-3/6/57; two on 3/8/57.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER — These favour the stony beaches at Kaiaua. Four on 3/6/57 and five on 3/8/57.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER — One on 22/12/56; nine on 17/2/57 at Miranda. Near Waitakaruru, on former saltmarsh now ploughed, there were c. 40 on 3/3/57 and c. 30 on 7/4/57.

BANDED DOTTEREL — Only eight to ten pairs bred on the Kaiaua-Miranda stretch. On 5/1/57, while three pairs were still on territory, two flocks were seen totalling 81 birds, of which only seven were juv. The influx continued c. 178, including many juv. on 20/1/57; c. 230 on 3/3/57 and c. 500 on 7/4/57 near Waitakaruru. None seen on 3/6/57, 9/6/57, 3 and 4/8/57.

N.Z. DOTTEREL — One or two pairs may have attempted to breed. On 12/12/56 there were at least five birds at Whakatiwai, and on 3/6/57, six between Kaiaua and Miranda. Parawai usually has a few, seven on 12/4/57 being the best count.

WRYBILL — c. 70 are known to have summered: e.g. 66 on 25/11/56 and 72 on 9/12/56. After the New Year numbers rapidly increased: e.g. 370+ on 5/1/57; 865+ on 20/1/57; c. 2000 on 17/2/57 on Miranda lagoon with an 11ft. 8in. tide; 2200+ on 7/4/57 near Waitakaruru; 2350+ on 9/6/57. Considerable numbers also gather at Parawai: e.g. 80 on 18/2/57; 400 on 11/3/57; but big tides may drive these to the Miranda side.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW — One seen several times during the summer; two on 17/2/57.

ASIATIC WHIMBREL — Seven (? nine) on 17/2/57.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT — Only c. 200 between Kaiaua and Waitakaruru on 9/9/56. Census, Kaiaua-Thames, 8200 on 25/11/56; 6000+ at

Miranda on 17/2/57. Of c. 500 present on 7/4/57, less than 2% were males in nuptial red. 510+ wintered. On 3/6/57 a very red godwit was seen near Waitakaruru; and c. 200 pale birds were seen some way inland on the Hauraki Plains.

ASIATIC BLACK-TAILED GODWIT — At least two were present throughout the summer. One in full nuptial dress on 25/11/56 was evidently the aberrant bird first recorded at Miranda on 30/8/52. One in grey plumage was seen on 22/12/56 and 5/1/57, when it was resting with stilts in a hollow among the Miranda shellbanks, exactly where two were seen during the previous summer. (v. *Notornis* 7, 58-59.) One in nuptial red near Kairito Creek on 7/4/57 was this bird, rather than the aberrant bird.

TURNSTONE — Five closely watched on 13/10/56 were adults in quite bright breeding dress; 10 on 24/10/56; 22 on 25/11/56, census; 24 on 17/2/57; 18 wintered being seen on 3/6/57 and 9/6/57; 15 on 3/8/57; 26 on 29/9/57.

KNOT — Census, Kaiaua - Thames, c. 5400 on 25/11/56. Only c. 40 remaining by 7/4/57; c. 200, many red, on 2/6/57.

SIBERIAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER — Four on 8/10/56; seven on 25/11/56; ten on 5/1/57; nine on 20/1/57; four on 3/3/57, one with well-developed crescentic spots on the flanks; six on 29/9/57.

CURLEW SANDPIPER — Of five found on 9/10/56, three were still partly red, and two were very pale juv. Presumably these five stayed all summer, being located several times till 3/3/57, when one was more reddened than any other yet seen in the Firth of Thames, and another was heavily blotched with red on the underparts. Two wintered with the Wrybills; being seen twice in June. There is only one previous record of wintering.

RED-NECKED STINT — As usual, odd birds straggled in during the spring: five on 5/1/57; four on 3/3/57, one showing some red; three on 7/4/57, one with neck well reddened; two on 2/6/57; two on 29/9/57.

PIED STILT — Census 25/11/56, Kaiaua - Thames, 152; Kaiaua - Miranda, 22/12/56, 162+; 5/1/57, 251, including juv. Successful breeding season, 3/3/57, Kaiaua - Waitakaruru, c. 1110. The biggest numbers are found on the southern stretch: e.g. c. 5000 on 18/2/57; 3000+ on 5/3/57.

BLACK-BILLED GULL — c. 400 on 9/9/56; c. 150 on 24/10/56; 18 (including 12 at Parawai) on 25/11/56; one on 22/12/56; three on 5/1/57; c. 40 on 3/3/57; 125 on 7/4/57; c. 330 on 3/6/57.

[WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN] — A tern, believed to be of this species, at Parawai on 1/10/57 (W.M.G.).]

CASPIAN TERN — 59 on census, 25/11/56, rather a large number for the season. c. 100 on 17/2/57.

WHITE-FRONTED TERN — c. 1000 at Whakatiwai and a few prospecting the Miranda shellbanks on 13/10/56. c. 700 nests, Kairito shellbank, 25/11/56, where breeding was unusually successful. Some young were just airborne on 5/1/57. A later colony at Miranda had 105 nests (14 with two eggs and the rest with one) on 5/1/57. This colony was not very successful. On 20/1/57 it contained c. 15 'live' nests and 15 chicks just hatched. At the Kairito colony there were still c. 150 young at all stages and c. 30 eggs. Many flying young were foraging up and down the Firth.

MANUKAU — (α) UPPER MANUKAU

S.I. PIED OYSTERCATCHER — 21 at Tararata Creek on 28/9/56; eight on 4/11/56; four on 24/12/56; six on 19/9/57; 27 on 30/10/57.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT — Some hundreds on 2/10/56; 2000 - 2500 on 5/11/56 and during the ensuing months; few remaining on 21/3/57; c. 100 at Tararata Creek on 19/9/57.