

OSNZ National Wader Census
 June - July 2014,
 November - December 2014 & January - February 2015
 Summary compiled by Adrian Riegen

Winter Census 2014

A total of 122,822 waders of 24 species were counted during the June - July 2014 wader census, up from 107,439 in June 2013, (Table 1). There was good national coverage with only Rangaunu in the Far North and Gisborne/Wairoa not counted. Numbers of Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit were considerably lower than in 2013, and about 17,000 more South Island Pied Oystercatchers were counted.

Rarities included, 2 Eastern Curlews, 2 Great Knot, 1 Sanderling, 1 Marsh Sandpiper and 1 Terek Sandpiper.

Summer Census 2014

A total of 130,964 waders of 28 species were counted in the November - December 2014 wader census, down from 141,761 in 2013. National coverage was again very good, with only Rangaunu, Gisborne/Wairoa and Manawatu not counted. The big difference was the godwit number, which have fluctuated widely over the past 10 years. The 2014 count was 74,667, down from 81,303 in 2013 and 77,103 in 2012, and a high of 101,459 in 2010. Considering the good coverage in 2014 this is a disturbing trend. Rangaunu regularly holds c3,000 godwits but even adding that, the number is still the lowest when good coverage has been achieved. The Red Knot count in 2014 was about 2,000 down on 2013 but a slight improvement on 2012. So the Red Knot numbers are reasonable stable at the moment, but with diminishing suitable habitat in the Yellow Sea during northward migration this situation could change. The Nelson region count of Red Knot in November was 12,475, almost 25% higher than the same count in February 2015. The third most numerous arctic wader species, the Turnstone, had a winter count up from 131 in 2013 to 362 in June 2014, but the summer count of 1562 was almost 500 less than summer 2013. The February 2015 Turnstone count in the Nelson region at 611 was 96 higher than the November 2014 count of 515.

Rarities this census included 1 Great Knot, 2 Wandering Tattler, 2 Marsh Sandpiper and 1 Grey Plover.

NOTE: Species listed in the following tables are arranged in accordance with the fourth edition of the OSNZ checklist.

Table 1. Total Count June - July 2014

Species	2013	2014
Red Knot	2,247	947
Great Knot		2
Sanderling		1
Curlew Sandpiper		9
Red-necked Stint	13	64
Eastern Curlew	2	2
Whimbrel	5	3
Bar-tailed Godwit	13,403	8,816
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	
Marsh Sandpiper	1	1
Terek Sandpiper	2	1
Turnstone	131	362
Variable Oystercatcher	2,769	3,014
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	62,353	79,381
Black Stilt/Hybrids	15	23
Oystercatcher Hybrid	15	20
Pied Stilt	14,431	17,282
Pacific Golden Plover	3	6
Grey Plover		1
New Zealand Dotterel	629	780
Banded Dotterel	4,433	5,860
Total >	107,439	122,822

Table 2. Total Count November - December 2014

Species	2013	2014
Red Knot	31,286	28,916
Great Knot	3	1
Sanderling	8	3
Curlew Sandpiper	12	15
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	17	3
Pectoral Sandpiper	4	3
Red-necked Stint	105	79
Eastern Curlew	8	3
Whimbrel	18	24
Bar-tailed Godwit	81,303	74,667
Black-tailed Godwit	1	1
Wandering Tattler		2
Marsh Sandpiper	1	2
Terek Sandpiper	1	1
Turnstone	2,001	1,562
Variable Oystercatcher	2,129	2,276
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	16,873	16,609
Oystercatcher Hybrid	16	4
Pied Stilt	5,084	4,354
Black Stilt/Hybrids	4	3
Pacific Golden Plover	134	69
Grey Plover		1
New Zealand Dotterel	525	483
Banded Dotterel	387	530
Lesser Sand Plover		2
Greater Sand Plover	1	
Oriental Plover	1	
Total >	141,761	130,964

There was incomplete nationwide coverage in January - February 2015, but counts from Northland, Lake Wairarapa, Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury and Southland were received. Numbers for Nelson are compared with November 2014 in Table 3 and likewise Southland in Table 4.

Table 3. Nelson Region counts for November 2014 and February 2015

Species	Nov.14	Feb.15
Red Knot	12,475	9,272
Sanderling		2
Curlew Sandpiper		2
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		2
Red-necked Stint	10	1
Eastern Curlew		2
Whimbrel	1	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	16,904	17,219
Turnstone	515	611
Variable Oystercatcher	770	586
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	3,605	17,278
Pied Stilt	76	360
Black Stilt/Hybrids		1
Pacific Golden Plover	16	31
New Zealand Dotterel		4
Grey Plover		1
Banded Dotterel	51	916
Lesser Sand Plover	1	
Total >	34,424	46,290

Table 4. Southland Region counts for November 2014 and February 2015

Species	Nov.12	Feb.13
Red Knot		124
Sanderling		3
Red-necked Stint	13	3
Bar-tailed Godwit	1,717	2,584
Turnstone	210	228
Variable Oystercatcher		85
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	50	2790
Pied Stilt	9	273
Pacific Golden Plover	5	47
New Zealand Dotterel		19
Banded Dotterel	1	142
Lesser Sand Plover		1
Spur-winged Plover	4	8
	2,009	6,307

Tables 5 and 6 show sites with more than 3,000 waders counted during winter and summer censuses.

Table 5. Sites with >3,000 waders in June - July 2014 & 2013

	2014	2013
Manukau Harbour	35,683	25,800
Kaipara Harbour	26,647	23,064
Firth of Thames	12,958	12,535
Farewell Spit	10,290	9,633
Tauranga Harbour	5,225	6,783
Tasman Bay	4,838	5,177
Golden Bay	4,448	4,917
Kawhia Harbour	3,111	(2,414)
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	(2,821)	(2,354)

Table 6. Sites with >3,000 waders in November - December 2014 & 2013

	2014	2013
Manukau Harbour	26,489	30,002
Farewell Spit	23,895	18,939
Kaipara Harbour	22,224	17,399
Firth of Thames	10,877	12,615
Tasman Bay	7,217	6,309
Tauranga Harbour	6,252	11,153
Whangarei Harbour	4,454	6,732
Golden Bay	3,364	3,389
Ohiwa Harbour	(2,767)	(2,221)