



## THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

**OSNZ—Birds New Zealand**

**December 2018**

<http://osnz.org.nz/> and  
<http://notornis.osnz.org.nz/>



*Birds New Zealand*

### Greetings

2018 is fast coming to a close. The major event for Wellington Birds New Zealand is organising and hosting the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting / Conference over Queen's Birthday 2019. Preparations are on track thanks to Ian Armitage who has had a central role in the organisation. The registration form for the conference will be available early in the new year on the new Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) website. Wellington members will be asked in 2019 to help with the running of the conference.

On the birding front there have been some interesting new sightings. A pair of New Zealand dotterel have nested at the Waikanae Scientific Reserve and a couple of chicks have hatched. This notable event once again highlights the need for improved protection of nesting shorebirds from human interference. There has been at least four sightings of a banded rail at the Pauatahanui Reserve. This is a most significant sighting as the nearest known breeding population are the salt marshes of Nelson and Marlborough.

There will not be a meeting in January. The first meeting of 2019 will be held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of February and will be the traditional Member's Evening with short talks. Members who would like to speak at this meeting should contact me.

Best wishes for 2019.

Geoff de Lisle, Wellington Regional Representative, Birds New Zealand (OSNZ)

Regional Representative: Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929 or [osnzwelly@gmail.com](mailto:osnzwelly@gmail.com)

Regional Recorder: Peter Hodge, [peter.hodgenz@gmail.com](mailto:peter.hodgenz@gmail.com)

Birds New Zealand Regional Roundup: Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop (04) 527 0929  
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Wellington Harbour Survey Geoff de Lisle, Stuart Nicholson

Mist netting – Matu Both, [manager@ngamanu.co.nz](mailto:manager@ngamanu.co.nz) Nga Manu, Waikanae

Ross Pickard [ross.pickard@hexagon.si.com](mailto:ross.pickard@hexagon.si.com) Wellington Zoo

### Upcoming Monthly Meetings WHERE and WHEN

Meetings are held at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps/ramp and across the carpark.

#### WHERE and WHEN:

The meeting is held on the first Monday of the month at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps and across the parking area to the door.

## There will not be a meeting in January

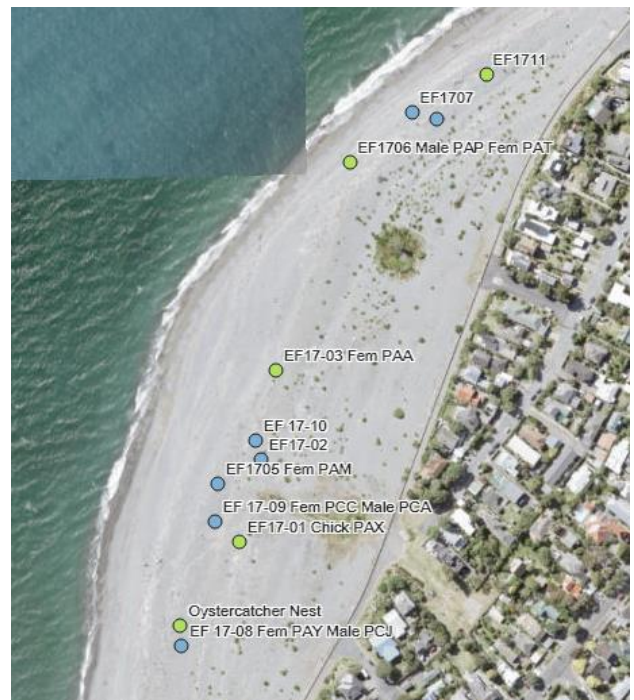
**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of February. Members' Meeting – short talks by members.** These talks will be 5-10 minutes long. Members who would like to present at this meeting should contact, Geoff de Lisle.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of March. Geoff Norman will talk on his new book "Birdstories".** The talk will include how he came to write this book and select the illustrations for it. For further information on "Birdstories" see the note on Summer Reading on Page 6.

## October: Parker Jones, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) & their use in Conservation

Parker Jones is the Chair of GIS in Conservation (GiC), a non-profit, charitable trust. GiC has over 140 skilled GIS developers and has helped over 60 NZ conservation and Iwi groups supplying in field applications and smart maps to assist their efforts at no cost. Parker's presentation covered an introduction to GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and how it is being used to help New Zealand's conservation efforts. The MIRO banded dotterel project was used as an example of GIS being used to help monitoring bird species. This is a project which Parker manages and is recording the breeding success of banded dotterels on the Eastbourne foreshore and at the outlet of the Lake Kohangapiripiri, one of the Pencarrow Lakes. Mapping of the nest locations is done with a phone application. Help from GIC is available to New Zealand researchers, including Birds New Zealand members carrying out projects. More details can be found on the following website, <http://nzgic.org/>

The map shows the nests locations on Eastbourne beach for the banded dotterel nests found in last year's breeding season.



## November: Barbara Tomotani, Pied flycatcher studies

Barbara is currently working at Te Papa on the isotopic and morphometric analyses of some of New Zealand's most threatened endemic birds (including some extinct species) – 10 species from kākāpō to huia. Her talk was based on her PhD studies on the nest-box population of pied flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) in Hoge Veluwe National Park in the Netherlands. This population has been intensively studied since the 1980s. Her studies investigated how climate change affected the timing of breeding, moult and migration. Factors investigated included spring migration (arrival dates), breeding (egg laying and hatching) and onset of post breeding moult. Advances in the timing of breeding compared with moult (moult advances faster) were recorded but there were no advancement of arrival dates. An examination of the year to year variations in the timing of the stages showed that they responded differently to temperature increases in the Netherlands, causing the intervals between arrival and breeding and between breeding and moult to decrease. Barbara's field observations were complemented with experimental manipulations to investigate the timing of breeding, moult and migration. Further details of Barbara's fascinating studies can be found in her thesis which is available online. <http://hdl.handle.net/11370/f449e110-14f5-42ad-b53d-904d7e467368>

Tomotani BM<sup>1</sup>, Gienapp P<sup>2</sup>, Beersma DG<sup>3</sup>, Visser ME<sup>4</sup> Climate change relaxes the time constraints for late-born offspring in a long-distance migrant., *Proc Biol Sci.* 2016 Sep 28;283(1839). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27655765>

Tomotani BM<sup>1</sup>, van der Jeugd H<sup>1,2</sup>, Gienapp P<sup>1</sup>, de la Hera I<sup>1,3</sup>, Pilzecker J<sup>4</sup>, Teichmann C<sup>1</sup>, Visser ME<sup>1</sup> Climate change leads to differential shifts in the timing of annual cycle stages in a migratory bird. *Glob Chang Biol.* 2018 Feb;24(2):823-835 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29211325>

Åkesson S<sup>1</sup>, Ilieva M<sup>2,3</sup>, Karagicheva J<sup>4</sup>, Rakhimberdiev E<sup>4,5</sup>, Tomotani B<sup>6</sup>, Helm B<sup>7</sup> Timing avian long-distance migration: from internal clock mechanisms to global flights. *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci.* 2017 Nov 19;372(1734) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28993496>

## December: Stephen Marsland, The use of acoustic recorders for monitoring birds.

Stephen is a Professor of Mathematics and Data Science, Victoria University. He works closely with Stuart Cockburn, Department of Conservation who was originally scheduled to talk on acoustic recorders. However, Stuart became unavailable due to scheduling of field work. Having a professor of mathematics talk on acoustic recorded highlights one of the major challenges in using them for surveying birds. There are difficulties in developing computer software to analyse recordings rather than getting them examined by experienced birders.

Priyadarshani N, Castro I, **Marsland S**. The impact of environmental factors in birdsong acquisition using automated recorders. *Ecol Evol.* 2018 Apr 24;8(10):5016-5033. doi: 10.1002/ece3.3889. eCollection 2018 May. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Marsland++S>

Priyadarshani N<sup>1</sup>, Marsland S<sup>1</sup>, Castro I<sup>2</sup>, Punchihewa A<sup>3</sup> Birdsong Denoising Using Wavelets. *PLoS One.* 2016 Jan 26;11(1):e0146790. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0146790. eCollection 2016.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26812391>

## New Regional Recorder

Peter Hodge has taken over the role of Regional Recorder from Nikki McArthur. Nikki is to be thanked for carrying out this role for many years, including after he left the Wellington Region to take up his role with Wildlife Management International in Blenheim. He made a notable contribution to the Wellington Region ensuring that observations made by local members were recorded in eBird. Nikki has completed 4267 complete ebird checklists which date back to 2001.

Peter has a very good knowledge of birds of the Wellington Region and has been an active contributor to eBird with over 2,200 checklists.

## Te Papa Blogs



Looking into the habits and well-being of penguins on the tiny island of Taumaka

: Susan Waugh 9 Oct 2018

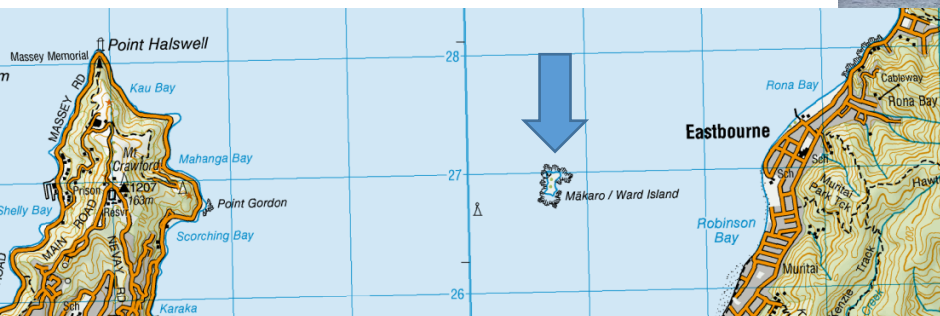
Kāti Mahaki and Te Papa scientists, including Head of Science Susan Waugh, recently teamed up for a trip to one of the jewels in the iwi's crown – the tiny islands of Taumaka and Popotai (aka the Open Bay Islands) in remote South Westland, near Haast – as part of their research of Fiordland penguins.

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/10/09/looking-into-the-habits-and-well-being-of-penguins-on-the-tiny-island-of-taumaka/>

## Makaro / Ward Island

**Mākaro/Ward Island** is one of the three small islands in **Wellington Harbour**, at the Southern end of the **North Island**, New Zealand.

Ward Island is on the eastern side of the harbour, about 1.7 kilometres west of **Eastbourne**. It is about 250 metres long and 80 metres wide, with the long axis aligned north/south. The significantly larger **Matiu/Somes Island** lies about 5 km northwest. The island has been pest free for a number of years.



There are multiple (36) submissions in eBird of observations from Makaro / Ward Island from 2001-2018. The majority of the submissions are from Shane Cotter (29), a smaller number from Peter Hodge (3), Nikki McArthur (3) and a

single entry from Colin Miskelly . The following is a summary of the eBird observations.

### Birds Recorded on Makaro / Ward Island

Mallard duck, Canada goose, black-backed gull, Red-billed gull, variable oystercatcher, white-fronted tern, gannet, white-faced storm petrel, fluttering shearwater, little penguin, reef heron, black shag, spotted shag, pied shag, little shag, little black shag, kingfisher, silveryeye, grey warbler, red-crowned parakeet, New Zealand falcon, blackbird, starling, song thrush, dunnock, house sparrow, yellowhammer, goldfinch, greenfinch & chaffinch.

Total species recorded 30.

### Interesting observations

**Red-crowned parakeets** (3) were first observed by Shane Cotter on 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 2008. They mostly likely came from Matiu/Somes Island where red-crowned parakeets were transferred to in 2003-2004. Parakeets were not transferred to Zealandia until 2010-2011. Red-crowned parakeets have been observed on 7 occasions and most recently on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2018. Up to 6 birds have been observed.

**New Zealand falcon**, was seen flying on one occasion (3/6/2014) by Peter Hodge.

**Red-billed gulls**. In contrast to black-backed gulls, red-billed gulls are rarely observed on Makaro / Ward Island. They were recorded on two occasions with a maximum number of 5 birds being observed. There were no records of red-billed gulls breeding on Makaro / Ward Island.

### Breeding Records

**Black-backed gulls**. The most commonly bird species observed with a maximum number of 168 recorded and they annually nest on the island. In 2001 97 birds were recorded with 48 nests and the following year there were 46 nests. On the 23/12/2017 14 chicks were banded.

**White-fronted terns** were reported on 13 occasions with a maximum number of 60 birds being recorded. In November 2016, Shane Cotter noted that the white-fronted terns had bred on the rock stack at the western corner of the island. Four nests were also located on the steep rock face on the southern end of the bay just south of the rock stack. A review of photographs taken from a boat revealed 17 sitting birds, most likely incubating eggs, making a total of 21 pairs breeding on the island.



**White-faced storm petrel.** The first eBird record (Shane Cotter) of a white-faced storm petrel was 1/12/2001 of a single bird in a burrow on a broken egg. The burrow was found by Saskia Wood. There are six eBird submissions reporting a single white-faced storm petrel with the most recent being from 27/9/2018 with a banded bird being located. All submissions reported a single bird from the same burrow.



White-faced storm petrel, banded, 20/11/2016. Photo, Shane Cotter

The nearest breeding colony of white-faced storm petrel is Sentinel Rock in the Marlborough Sounds but the nearest large colonies are in the Bay of Plenty, Hauraki Gulf, Chatham Islands and Foveaux Strait.



Colin Miskelly holding a white-faced storm petrel, 1/12/2001. Photo, Shane Cotter

**Reef heron.** There are five records of reef heron (17/3/2006-23/12/2017) with only one bird recorded on each occasion. In 2017 a nest with a dead chick was located in the south west corner of the island.

**Spotted shags** were regularly observed on Makaro / Ward Island. The first record of breeding was on 14/8/2003 with 22 birds and 8 nests being identified. Subsequent records noted a small spotted shag colony on the west face on the north-west point of the island. This colony is probably a spill over from the much larger colony on Matiu / Somes Island where over 350 birds and up to 52 nests have been recorded (Waugh et al., 2013).

**Little penguins.** While the stronghold of nesting little penguins in Wellington is Matiu / Somes Island they also nest annually on Makaro / Ward Island. The birds nest in artificial nest boxes and natural burrows. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 2011 7 birds were observed and 23 sites were visiting – 11 artificial boxes and 12 natural burrows.

**Dunnock** were often recorded on Makaro / Ward Island and on one occasion (23/12/2017) there was evidence of breeding with an adult feeding a fledgling.

Shane Cotter

Waugh, S, Tennyson, A, Orange, R, Sharp, S, Cotter, R, Batcheler, R, & Batcheler, D. (2013) Numbers of spotted shags (*Stictocarro punctatus*) at breeding sites in Wellington harbour, 2002-2012, *Notornis* 60(4), 285-289.

## Birds Put Billions Into U.S. Economy: Latest U.S. Fish And Wildlife Report

From the [Autumn 2018](#) issue of Living Bird magazine. [Subscribe now](#).

### MORE FROM LIVING BIRD

#### Living Bird Magazine—Latest Issue

- [Living Bird Magazine Archives](#)

This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published the latest edition of its national survey of outdoor recreation: how many

people participate and what sorts of associated purchases they make in pursuit of their hobbies. The report's official title is the [2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#) (download the PDF). (It takes a couple of years for economists to crunch the numbers, that's why it's the 2016 report, not the 2018 report). Any way you look at it, though, birding stands out as a powerhouse in the outdoors economy. Here are the big numbers:

#### 45 Million Bird Watchers:

The number of Americans 16 years and older who are bird watchers, including more than 16 million who travel beyond their home to watch birds and 10 million who specifically travel to seek out songbirds.

#### \$1.8 Billion Spent On Equipment:

Dollars spent annually on binoculars and spotting scopes for wildlife watching, more than the amount spent by hunters purchasing rifles and shotguns.

#### \$4 Billion Spent On Bird Food:

Dollars spent annually on bird food, more than the amount spent on rods and reels by anglers.

**Note:** We present comparisons with the hunting and fishing industries out of a sense of friendly competition, acknowledging that hunters and anglers have been and continue to be strong partners in conservation of our shared outdoors.

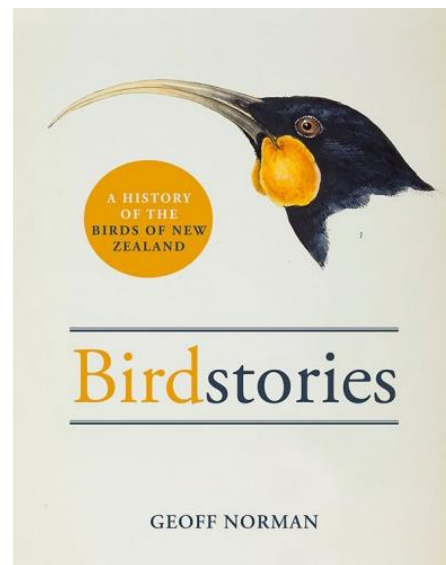
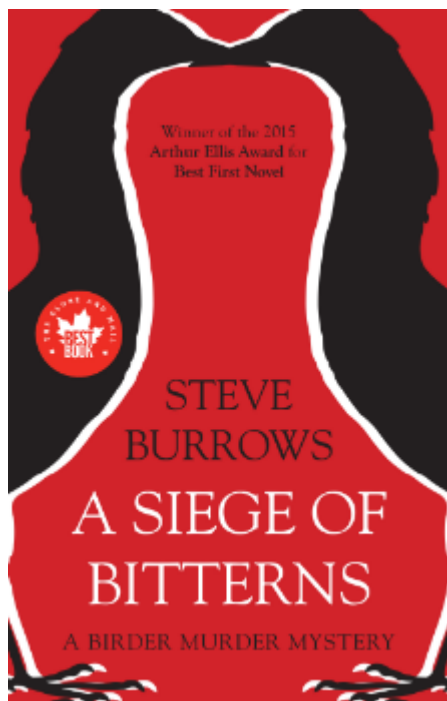
### Summer Reading

If you wish to do some birding this summer as well as catch up on some relaxing reading I can whole-heartedly recommend “A Siege of Bitterns” by Steve Burrows. The author has included his interest in bird watching into a crime novel. A “Siege of Bitterns” is the first in a series of crime novels in which his main character DCI Domenic Jejeune prefers bird watching to being a detective. If you like “A Siege of Bitterns” there are five more books in the DCI Jejeune series.

If birdy crime fiction is not your cup of tea then “Birdstories” by Geoff Norman is well worth reading. This is Geoff’s second book – his first book was the highly successful “Buller’s Birds of New Zealand, The complete works of JG Keulemans”. “Birdstories” is an updated history of the birds of New Zealand. A major strength of the book is the illustrations. Not only are there large number of historical paintings and drawing of birds but also an excellent selection

of pictures of modern painters. The text includes both the historical stories and the up-to-date modern stories. At \$60 this nearly 400 page book is great value for money.

There is a 10% discount for Birds New Zealand members; For details see <https://www.osnz.org.nz/sites/osnz.org.nz/files/Birdstories-Kakapo%201811.jpg>



## Bird Snippets

### Wellington City biodiversity

**ledzep** » Wed Oct 17, 2018 4:50 pm

Good views of a Falcon today near the Birchville Dam on the Cannon Point walkway, -41.090481 175.085316. Calling and flying overhead over the gully on the track leading south up the hill from the dam. Also views of several male Tomtits near the Cannon Point trig and some Whitehead and California Quail.

### Shining Cuckoos 2018

**Colin Miskelly** » Sat Oct 20, 2018

Shining cuckoos are still inconspicuous around Wellington. I have yet to hear one giving a full song, but had great views of an apparent pair in Zealandia today (from c.5 metres, through binoculars) gleaning insects, with one bird calling with downward-slurred notes only. Only a single other brief call heard in about 5 hours in the valley. BirdingNZ.net

**Colin Miskelly** » Mon Oct 22, 2018

I was back in Zealandia for about 6 hours today, and this time did hear full song 3 times, but only picked up a single cuckoo during 5-minute bird counts. That made 2 individuals in a total of forty 5-minute counts over the two days, about half the expected rate for this time of year (according to a paper in the latest issue of Notornis). It is a small sample size, but maybe they are starting to respond to the decline in grey warblers in Zealandia.

Between counts I had another great sighting of an apparently courting cuckoo pair. I was attracted by a full song from a pine just outside the eastern fenceline. One of the birds flew about 40 away to another pine, then a short time later flew back (towards me) with shallow fluttering wing beats (rather like a courting swallow), then hopped around the other bird with head raised, tail cocked, and wing-tips drooped below normal, while giving the downward-slurred note. Unfortunately they then flew into dense vegetation, so my voyeurism was terminated. BirdingNZ.net

**CMKMStephens** » Mon Oct 22, 2018

I was also in Zealandia for about 8 hours today. Went up and done the kotukutuku track (nothing), but later at the northern end of the Valley View track did hear adults twice, one full song, and couple of one note 'phews'. BirdingNZ.net

**Jim\_j** » Mon Oct 22, 2018

Still none heard or seen around Pukerua Bay area - from the comments on this site it would seem numbers are still low everywhere? - or just not being reported compared to other years? BirdingNZ.net

**CMKMStephens** » Sun Oct 28, 2018

Heard one in Zealandia on my typical fenceline walk (finally). BirdingNZ.net

### Waterstone Subdivision Lakes, Paraparaumu

Rosemary Heather, Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

8 Canada geese, 2 mallard ducks, 3 domestic ducks, 1 black swan, 2 dabchick.

On the land, swallows, silvereyes, sparrows, 2 thrushes and 2 greenfinches (calling).

### Banded rail spotted at Pauatahanui 2018

**bsd1** » Wed Nov 14, 2018 10:45 am

As suggested when I posted on another topic I'm reporting the sighting of a banded rail at Pauatahanui, Porirua. I was out wandering with the hope of spotting fernbird and popped into the hide overlooking the pool by Grays Road. I opened one of the viewing ports and was surprised to see a banded rail apparently sunning itself a short distance away. I got a number of photos as the bird sat still, just occasionally turning its head and once having a good shake. It stayed in the same spot for 5 minutes or so before a passing harrier spooked it and it disappeared into the reeds. BirdinNZ.net

Note; This is at least the fourth sighting of banded rail at the Pauatahanui Reserve and includes 2 submissions to the Record Appraisal Committee. All sightings have been made from the Thorpe hide.

### Re: Rifleman Days Bay

**ledzep** » Sun Dec 09, 2018

I was on the Hawtree route today between Eastbourne and Days Bay. At approx the highest point (about 320 m asl) at 174.912597 -41.292142 I came across a number of birds. At least 3 or 4 Rifleman at that spot. Plus another pair on the other side of the ridge about 50 metres on (north) feeding on the ground near a yellow trap with number 200037939254, and another Rifleman flew across the track about 200 metres north of that spot. Also Grey Warbler, Silvereye, Whitehead, Tomtit calling (and I saw 2 male Tomtits further along the track towards Days Bay), Fantail, Chaffinch and Bellbird. There looks to be a lot of trapping going on along the ridge track and it seems to be paying off. That is the most Rifleman I have seen up there. Maybe if numbers are up the plan to translocate some to Zealandia will be back on again. If anyone is thinking of going up there, I recommend going up Mackenzie or Ferry Road tracks - the Kereru track is hard work, very rooted and steep near the top. BirdingNZ.net

#### [Pomarine / Arctic Skua, Mana Island](#)

**CMKMStephens** » Mon Dec 10, 2018  
Saturday 8 December, c.3:30pm on way back from Mana Island. BirdingNZ.net

#### [Pied Stilts Mana Island](#)

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle, Thurs Dec 13

On following up a report of pied stilts on Mana Island four pied stilts were found guarding 2 nests, each with four eggs. The birds are nesting on the beach just above the high tide mark. This is a significant

event as pied stilts have rarely been seen on Mana Island, even as casual visitors.



Photo – Beach where pied stilts nesting. There is also a pair of variable oystercatchers nesting on this beach.

#### [Royal spoonbill, Island Bay](#)

Sandy Winterton, Dec 15, 2018  
Adult royal spoonbill at Siren Rocks. Spoonbills are rare visitors to this side of the harbour.



## A SUMMARY OF BIRD COUNTS at PAEKAKARIKI and WHAREROA FARM RESERVE 2010 – 2018

### Helen Griffiths 5/10/18

There have been 5MBCs recorded at several locations on the Kapiti Coast during 2010 and 2018. My involvement has been with 5 sites at the northern end of the Paekakariki Escarpment 2010-2011 and 2015-2018, and in two areas, each of 5 sites, at Whareroa Farm Reserve 2011-2013 and 2013-2015. These counts have provided baseline data for future surveys.

All sites were revisited during the Kapiti Biodiversity Project 2015-2018.

#### Paekakariki Escarpment

In 2010 five minute bird count sites were set up from the Paekakariki overbridge to opposite Fishermans Table

Four bird count sites are situated along the Te Araroa track, north of the Quarry, and one site at the top of the Loop track. The counts were done weekly from July to October 2010 and then monthly from November to June 2011.

There were some count site changes made in 2015 because of the new Te Araroa track and the huge growth in vegetation from intensive planting over the previous 8 years. The numbers of some species such as chaffinch, dunnock, greenfinch, goldfinch and yellowhammer have declined. This could be due to vegetation covering the grasslands and also poorer visibility. There has, however, been a marked increase in the tui population and there have been constantly high numbers of silvereye. Kereru have been seen more often, also many fantails and the occasional bellbird.

It was interesting to see a tui nest built on the 'zig' of the Loop track. That, and the splendid flowering of the kohekohe this year may be testament to successful pest control in the area. All records have been entered on eBird.



21 species were recorded:

Bellbird	Chaffinch	Goldfinch	Aust. Harrier	Rock pigeon	Starling	Thrush
Blackbird	Dunnock	Greywarbler	Kereru	Silvereye	Sparrow	Tui
Blackbacked gull	Fantail	Greenfinch	Kingfisher	Shining cuckoo	Swallow	
Yellowhammer						

#### Whareroa Farm Reserve

In 2011 bird count sites 1 – 5 were set up in areas where planting had been done or was currently being planned, near the streams and the main farm race.

These were done weekly from July until November 2011, then monthly until 2013.

During the two years there were no noticeable changes.

Another series of counts were done from 2015 –2017 for the Kapiti Biodiversity Project.

The main difference during this time was the dramatic increase in vegetation from intensive planting, and some storm damage, which made observations a little more difficult.

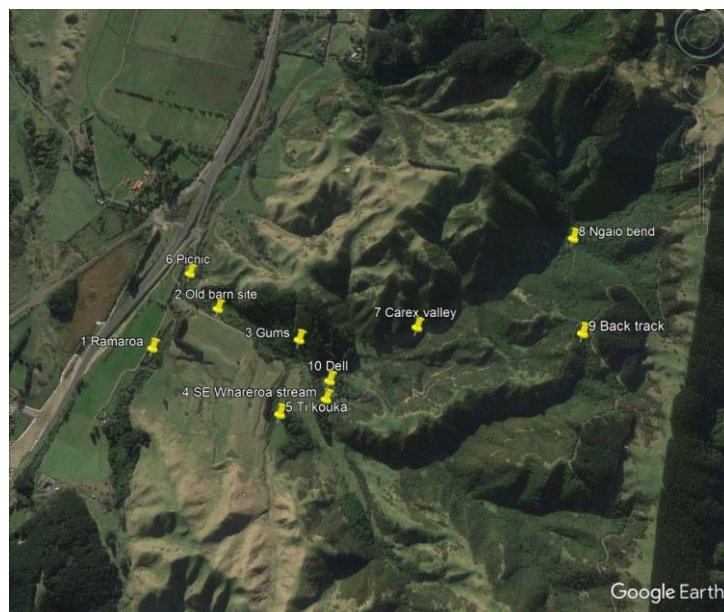
Again there was very little change though more tuis and kereru were seen and less of the introduced passerines.

In 2013 - 2015 five more count sites 6 – 10 were set up to cover from the Whareroa Farm entrance, to the northern valley and eastern boundary. These were done twice monthly from July to November 2013, then monthly to June 2015. One tomtit was seen, but only once, at the northern end of the valley otherwise good sightings of tui and kereru and many silvereyes, chaffinches, redpolls, greywarblers and other birds listed.

When this area was revisited in 2017 there was little change, a slight decline in numbers of small birds – but good tui, bellbird and kereru sightings.

In June the bird song in the flowering kohekohe forest was remarkable, probably due to the intense pest control.

Again, all records have been entered on eBird.



33 species were recorded:

Bellbird	Blackbacked gull	Silvereye	Mallard	NZ Falcon	Wf Heron
Blackbird	Chaffinch	Sparrow	Paradise shelduck	Pheasant	Little shag
Dunnock	Eastern Rosella	SW plover	Pukeko	Redpoll	Black shag
Fantail	Goldfinch	Swallow	Rock pigeon	Shining cuckoo	Morepork (not seen)
Aust. Harrier	Kereru	Thrush	Tomtit	Greywarbler	during a 5mbc)

## Wellington Harbour Survey 2018 – 2020

The survey started in August 2018 and the December survey was the fifth to be completed. The table below is a summary of the November survey with the total number of birds seen over the 17 sections which are between the sewer outfall at Pencarrow to Owhiro Bay. While there are still 19 more months to complete some issues have become apparent. In particular there is a lot of human activity round the harbour, especially if the weather is fine. In the November survey the highest number of people recorded in any section was 827 for section 11, Clyde Quay Terminal to Point Jerningham. Of interest is the number of dogs recorded, the highest count was in August with 163 and November was similar with 149. Notably approximately 2/3 of the dogs are not on a leash. The question arises as to what effect human activity is having on the birds of the harbour.

No reef herons were recorded in November but had been observed in the first three counts.

Apart from birds a number of seals have been observed during the survey. In the October survey, Lisa Fraser took the picture (right) of a leopard seal which was on Petone beach.



Thanks to all the people who have participated in the survey. We are always looking for new volunteers to help with the survey. This includes those who may only occasionally be able to participate and those who will only be intermittently available. For those interested please contact Geoff de Lisle [osnzwelly@gmail.com](mailto:osnzwelly@gmail.com).

Blackbird	21	Rock pigeon	110		
Banded dotterel	1	Black shag	8		
Chaffinch	12	Little shag	55		
Dunnoek	2	Little black shag	6		
Bar-tailed godwit	1	Spotted shag	6		
Goldfinch	12	Pied shag	26		
Greenfinch	9	Fluttering shearwater	65		
Black-backed gull	713	Silvereye	10		
Red-billed gull	444	House sparrow	211		
Black-billed gull		Royal spoonbill	4		
Reef heron		Starling	228	People	
White-faced heron	2	Welcome swallow	9	Dogs – on leash	56
Kingfisher	1	Black swan	9	Dogs – not on leash	93
Mallard	39	White-fronted tern	185		
Variable oystercatcher	85	Tui	14		
South Island pied oystercatcher	2	Song thrush	4		

## Coloured Black-backed Gull Study

Wellington Airport in collaboration with Wellington, Hutt City and Porirua councils, Victoria University and the Department of Conservation, is to track the movement of black-backed gulls in Wellington by marking them with special dye as part of a programme to study bird movement and prevent bird-strike.

The gulls will be painted with a non-toxic dye at the Southern, Spicers (Porirua) and Silverstream landfills to help better understand the species, their habitat, migration and flight patterns. Southern landfill birds will be marked orange, while Spicers landfill birds marked apple green and Silverstream landfill birds blue.

The four-week study, which is the first of its kind in New Zealand, will also see the birds' nesting and migrating movement patterns tracked by GPS. The food grade-quality dye is not harmful to the birds and is designed to wash off after a period of two to four weeks.

Black-backed gulls are a species native to a number of countries including New Zealand but their numbers have been boosted artificially by their habit of scavenging on human scraps. The gulls are often considered a threat to other native seabirds and waders.

If you've seen the marked black-backed gulls, please supply details here.

<https://www.wellingtonairport.co.nz/community/bird-study/bird-study/>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/109294956/wellington-birds-show-their-true-colours-in-airport-tracking-project>



## East Harbour Banded dotterels - update

The MIRO project is monitoring banded dotterels on Eastbourne beach and at the outlet of Lake Kohangapiripiri. Currently there have been a number of attempts to nest on the Eastbourne beach. However, the first nesting attempts have failed and in late October there was only one active nest. The cause of nest failures for the first three nests is unknown but could have been either predation or human interference. For the first three nests one-strand wire fences and notices were erected to protect the nests from human interference. Unfortunately it is possible that these fences have led to the nests being disturbed due to human activity.

The following is the history of the 4<sup>th</sup> nest. No fence was erected round the nest and the nest was monitored with a trail camera. There are notices on the sea wall by the beach asking the public to avoid using the area as there are birds nesting.

**Parents, PCC & PCA.** These birds were captured and banded during the previous breeding season. The nest was found on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September and abandoned on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October. The abandonment of the nest occurred just before the eggs would have hatched as the incubation period for banded dotterels is 25-27 days (Heather & Robertson).



Selected trail camera pictures. The top left picture shows a banded dotterel sitting on the nest. The picture below shows the two parents, with the male on the left and female behind on the right.



The above are only a selection of the people and dogs photographed. None of the pictures indicated that any of the members of the public realised that there was a nest close by or that they were being filmed. The birds were very lucky that the eggs were not accidentally trampled. 20<sup>th</sup> October, nest 3 eggs.

There were a subsequent series of pictures that indicate that the nest was destroyed by a cat. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of October there are a couple of pictures of what appears to be a cat which did not find or approach the nest.

(1) 25<sup>th</sup> October cat at nest: 8.40pm to 8.43pm, bird returned 10.14 visited

(2) Cat returned, 25<sup>th</sup> of October 10.49pm

Bird returned 10.53 pm

(3) Banded dotterel 25<sup>th</sup> of October  
11.03pm, removing egg shell, visited nest  
11.05 and 11.06 pm

(4) 26<sup>th</sup> of October, 4.08 am, Bird back at  
5.15am. tried sitting 7.06 & 8.12am

(5) 26<sup>th</sup> October, cat visited 8.57-8.58pm

(6) October 27, cat visited 1.09am

(7) A banded dotterel was back at the nest  
at 5.36am on the 27<sup>th</sup> – tries to sit. The nest was checked on 11.11am on the 27<sup>th</sup> and only one egg present. When checked again on the 28<sup>th</sup> 11.29am no eggs present.



The trail camera pictures have been vital in identifying the causes of banded dotterel nest failures on the Eastbourne beach. The challenge arises as to how these nest failures can be prevented.

Alternative fencing of the nesting area has been established to reduce possible human interference and at the same time not highlighting the location of nests.

December Update: A chick has been banded at the Eastbourne study site and a further six banded at the Lake Kohangapiripiri beach site. In addition a new nest has been found at the Eastbourne site as well as at the Lake Kohangapiripiri site. Two of the chicks that were banded and flagged at the Lake site are just about ready to fledge. More chicks have been recently observed at the Lakes site.

## New Zealand Dotterel – Waikanae Scientific Reserve

There have been recent reports on the internet regarding the presence of New Zealand dotterels at the Waikanae Scientific Reserve. Last year New Zealand dotterels attempted to breed at Waikanae but no chicks fledged. The presence of New Zealand dotterels further highlighted the need for better control of human activity to increase the chances of successful breeding. An additional potential problem is disturbance of nesting birds by photographers wanting to get the perfect picture.

**Nikki McArthur** » Mon Nov 19, 2018

Three NZ dots present at the Waikanae Estuary yesterday. Also at least three pairs of variable oystercatchers nesting on the sandspit on northern/true right side of river, with nests containing three, three and one egg respectively. BirdingNZ.net

**Nikki McArthur** » Tue Dec 04, 2018

Just to clarify, my colleague Samantha Ray found the NZ dotterel nest on the 19th November, and it contained three eggs. We were visiting the estuary as part of a coastal bird survey we're carrying out for Greater Wellington Regional Council and Maritime NZ, and so were specifically looking for evidence of breeding birds. We're now nearing the end of this survey, having almost finished walking around 450 km of the Wellington and Wairarapa coastlines, and boating around all of the islands, mapping the distribution and abundance of coastal shorebirds down to a 1 km resolution.

As Alan says, it's great news that these eggs have hatched, as it's the first record I'm aware of NZ dotterels successfully breeding on the Wellington west coast. That said, our coastal survey has turned up NZ dotterels at five locations on the Wairarapa coast, including as far south as the Pahaoa River mouth, which is actually further south than Waikanae. NZ dotterels have been breeding successfully at Riversdale Beach for several years of course, but finding them at four other locations along the Wairarapa coastline was certainly a welcome surprise.

Given the historical nature of the Waikanae breeding attempt, it would be great to get confirmation of whether or not these chicks successfully fledge. If there are still concerns about word getting around and the chicks being disturbed, perhaps just waiting until well after they've fledged before providing an update would be the way to go.

Then again, I suspect given the location that it's going to be really difficult to keep this sort of thing under wraps, now or in the future. I notice for example that DoC have put out a Facebook post in the last week, announcing that the eggs have hatched - not the most sensible thing to do if the aim is to keep this event low profile. Given this, perhaps a more successful approach would be to be completely up front about the presence of the birds, and to put in fencing, signage etc to manage levels of disturbance. Given the convenient location, even a roster of nest-minders on busy days/weekends might also be a good idea, as is done at some of the coastal sites up north. BirdingNZ.net

Lake Kohangapiripiri outlet - MIRO Banded dotterel study area. New Zealand dotterel recorded by Aye Anderson, 30/1/2018, eBird.

Lake Kohangatera outlet. Wellington Regional Council data, 6/1/2006, eBird.