

Black-billed Gull Study – Disturbance and Predation

Annual productivity data collected over the past several years in the Marlborough and Nelson regions have indicated that predation at various levels on black-billed gull colonies is occurring during the breeding season. The colonies on some rivers, such as the Buller, Matakaitaki, and Awatere, have experienced complete breeding failure over several years whereas colonies on other rivers, such as the Wairau, appear to be impacted on a minor level. The repeated and unsustainable detriment of at least three colonies over a lengthy period of time needs to be explained. This project proposes to set up remote cameras at each colony (in Marlborough and Nelson) in order to determine the cause of disturbance and failure. The cameras will be programmed to take photos at given intervals during the daytime and at night. This will identify the level of predation and problem areas, and will also provide the information needed for planning appropriate management actions. With the help of the BNZRF, I am able to purchase the required equipment.

I will, of course, be continuing my banding and resighting of colour banded birds as well. Please keep an eye out for these birds across the country, and let me know if you're in the Marlborough and/or Nelson region and would like to get involved (Claudia "at" wnil.co.nz).

