

Birds New Zealand
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Birds New Zealand

Otago Region Newsletter 7/2016 July 2016

Survey of Sinclair Wetlands

We have completed a year of seasonal counts for Sinclair Wetlands and written a report for the Sinclair Wetlands Trust. We are to repeat the survey for a second year. The winter survey is re-scheduled for Saturday 7th August. The following summarises the findings so far.

Number of Species

A total of 36 species were observed in the wetlands during our surveys. Pied stilts and white-faced heron were also seen on other occasions. Bittern are also present as ascertained from booming calls recorded during spring 2015 (unpublished data). There have also been unconfirmed reports of spotless crane. So the total number of species in the wetlands could be as high as 40.

Waterbirds

12 species of waterbirds were seen, which included 8 native species (i.e. 67% were native waterfowl species). From the combined total for the 4 seasonal counts, 74% of the total number of birds was native waterfowl species. Scaup (papango) were present in the highest numbers, and dominated (50% of all waterbird numbers). Mallard ducks were the next most abundant at 17% of waterbird numbers (Figure 1).

The total number of waterbirds present on the ponds varied markedly with season being highest in winter (1168) and autumn (729). 51% of all waterfowl was counted in winter. There were lowest numbers seen in spring (132). The highest number of each species also varied with the season with scaup and grey teal being present in highest numbers in

winter, shoveler present mainly in autumn, and Paradise duck mainly in summer. (Fig.2)

Fig. 1 Rank abundance of waterbirds

The proportion of each species of the combined total of birds from the 4 seasonal counts.

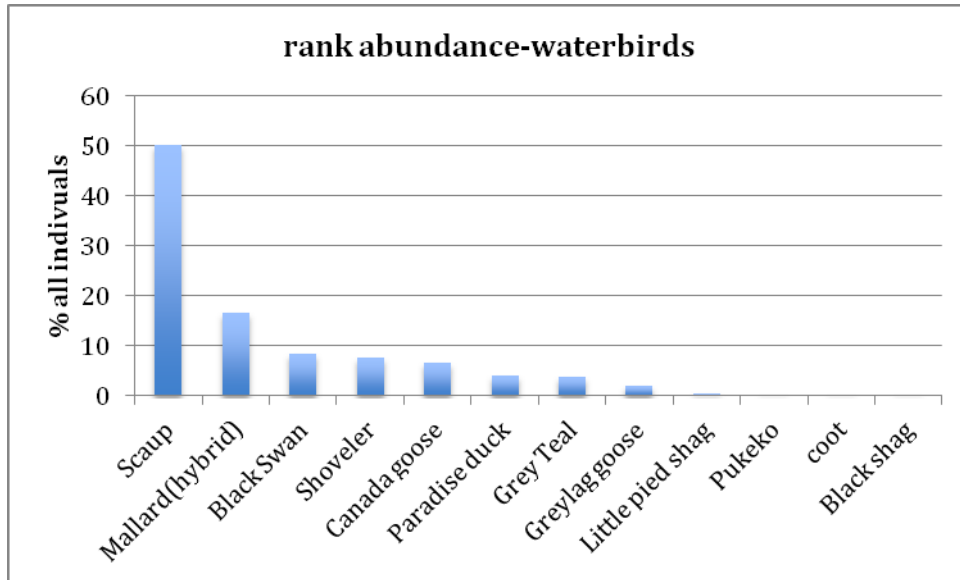
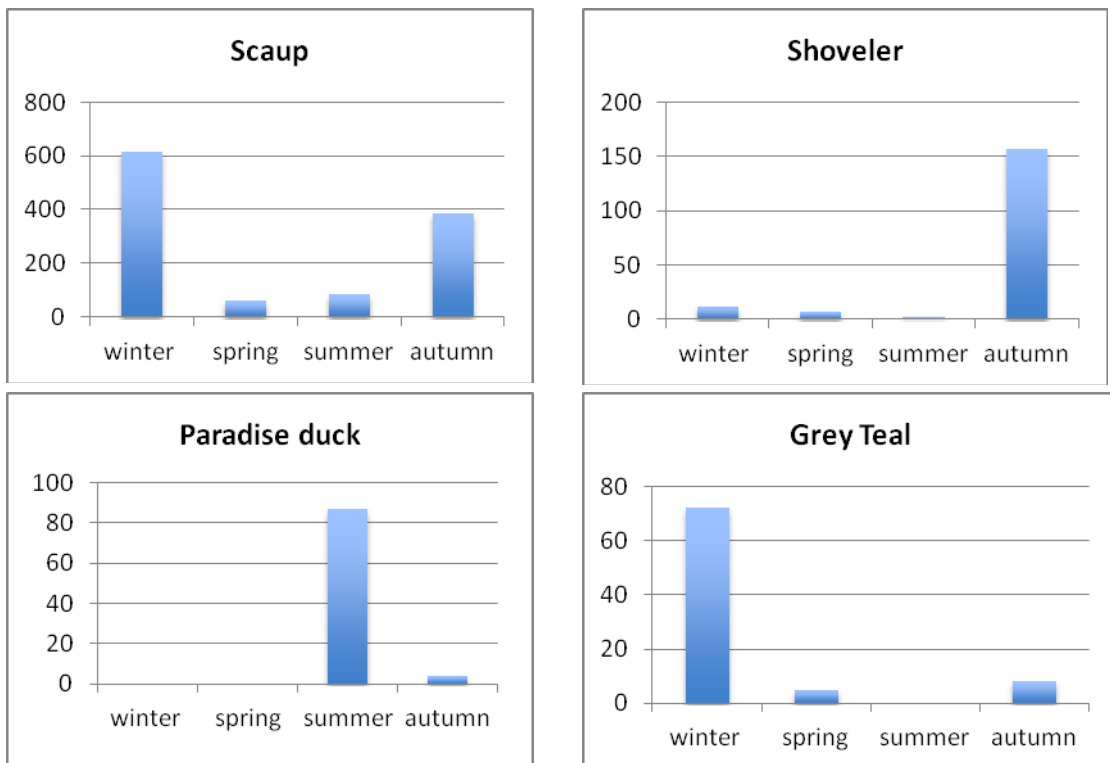


Fig.2 Comparison of seasonal numbers of native ducks on Sinclair Wetland ponds

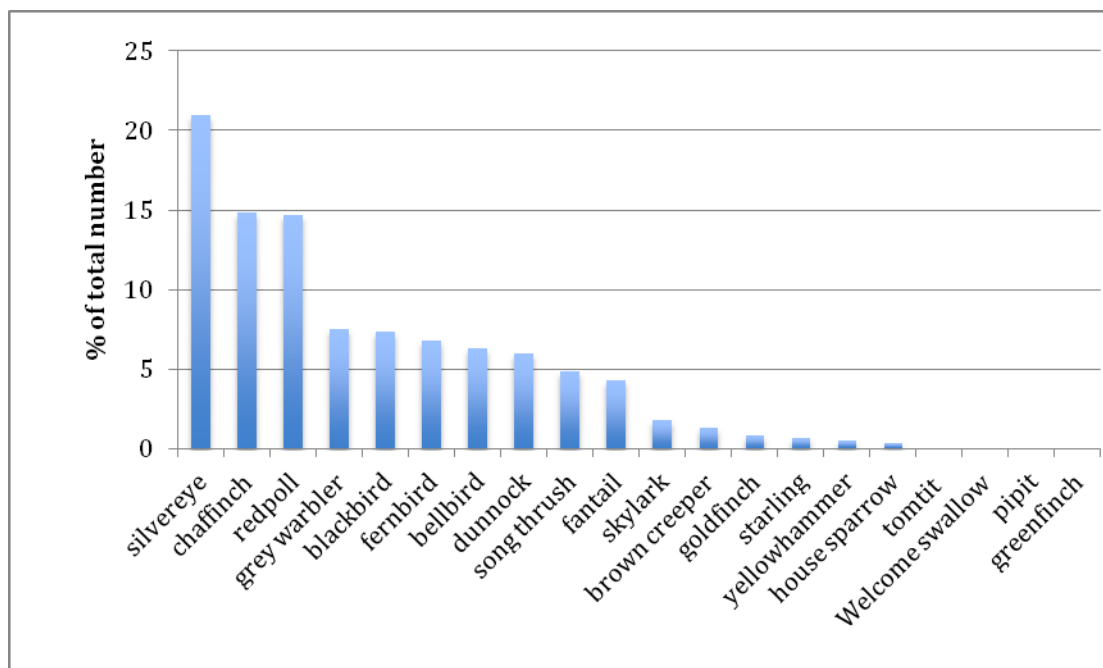


Land/forest birds

17 species of birds were seen on Ram Island with 2 more flying over (harrier, magpie). 41% of these species were native. Riflemen and tomtits were absent and only 1 tui was seen; these are three species of native bush birds that might return as the restoration projects mature.

Fig.3 Rank-abundance for birds counted on Ram Island

The proportion of each species of the combined total of birds from the 4 seasonal counts.



Fernbirds

Fernbirds were very evident. The highest number was seen in summer, which may include juveniles still present in the parents' territory. The number seen or heard in winter was lowest and this is probably due to the less territorial behaviour.

Fernbird counts along the 1 km transect of sedgeland.

	winter	spring	summer	autumn
total per transect	6	19	32	14
density per hectare	0.8	2.53	4.27	1.87

Mary Thompson

Coastal Otago Winter Wader Count 19 June 2016

	Karitane	Blueskin Bay	Aramoana	Harbour west	Harbour east	Papanui Inlet	Hoopers Inlet	Catlins	Total 2016	Total 2015	Total 2014
Pied Oystercatcher	77	438	127	190	7	182	30	141	1192	1210	1516
Variable Oystercatcher	5	20	2	10	31	34	2	8	112	143	86
Pied Stilt	41	48	13		49	69	7	5	232	197	148
Banded Dotterel		5	85				148	30	268	169	181
Spur-winged Plover	118	16	4		2	3	3	135	281	58	50
Bar-tailed Godwit		6	20			6	168	8	208	183	265
White-faced Heron			2	2	25		3	47	79	64	8
Bittern								1	1		
Spoonbill							1	5	6		
Little Shag				168	181			19	368	305	716

A very good year with the major areas covered. Compared with the previous 2 years the Pied Stilt numbers are up as are Banded Dotterels. A very good, early and successful breeding season ? The Godwits must have liked Hoopers Inlet, since the outlet was open. This compiler has a soft spot for the Little Shags. It is still a puzzle that the numbers in June 2014 were double the numbers we had in this and last year's survey.

Peter Schweigman



Hooper's Inlet Wader Survey



The group that surveyed Hooper's Inlet; Abbi, Mareta, Warren, Cody and Nic, struck the jackpot with calm weather and sun at a good angle for great viewing. From the totals (see elsewhere in newsletter) it looks like most of the godwits were at Hooper's - now that it is open to the sea and undergoes regular tides it is obviously much more popular with them. The banded dotterels were some way off but the sun lit up their undersides so they showed well and a juvenile spoonbill came feeding right by us. It was pleasing that the folk new to Dunedin had a good introduction to the Peninsula birds.

Our Living World-bird-watching walks

On Sunday 10th July a goodly number of us spent the afternoon at the Botanic Garden, contributing to the Science Festival Event. Thanks to everyone who helped out. We set up a display of nests in the Information Centre with posters and banner, Birds NZ magazine and other information. We led several walks around the lower garden and managed to see 22 species. The participants gave us positive feedback. And most of us enjoyed spotting birds around the garden on the sunny, calm day.

Ornithological snippets

Richard Schofield was hoping to have another gripping catalogue of interesting sightings but the only reports he received were of **Brown Creeper** and **Yellow-crowned Parakeets** at Haast in March, and a repeat sighting of a **Bittern** at Catlins Lake. So here instead are a few other bits and pieces.

Jan Wilson wrote "Last week I was having coffee with a group of women and while we were talking about feeding the wild birds, one woman mentioned that the sparrows in her backyard had taken to drinking the sugar water and were chasing away the Waxeyes and (a male) even 'elbowing' out the Bellbird!!! Is this something new, or is it just beginning to happen? It occurred to me that if it were new, then an interesting study could be made into; if it spreads, how, when and where and how long would it take."



Janet Ledingham came across, "A sad sight yesterday, (6 July) this young Spoonbill caught up in the wire at the top side of the rickety bridge on the Papanui Inlet track. Too awkward for me to get down to it, but an athletic type should be able to get it at low tide."

If we can include Bruce McKinlay's world travels in the Otago newsletter, then surely we can let Graeme Loh report on his foreign adventure:-



On 10 July, he sailed from Jacksons Bay to Cascade Point, Haast in Theo Stephens "Blue Nose". "Went down the coast in calmish conditions. One kilometre off the Smoothwater Bay; Red-billed gulls 80, White-fronted Terns 5, Hutton's/Fluttering Shearwaters 20, were gathered around small work ups. Kahawai were breaking the surface in rushes. We caught three, their bellies were mostly full of whitebait. A fur seal ,Black-backed Gull and a Buller's Mollymawk were half interested in the action. Three Spotted Shags just flew past."



Species seen were: Buller's Mollymawk, Shy Mollymawk, Northern Giant Petrel, Hutton's/ Fluttering Shearwaters, Gannet, Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, White-fronted Tern, Spotted Shag.

Thurso in Scotland is about as far away from Otago as you can get but the reporter's Kim and Jenny Morrison are ex Otago Peninsula residents and our NZ garden bird survey was just a few weeks ago; which, in a letter to Mary, is what they were doing

"We are having afternoon tea and doing a garden bird count: Blackbird, 3 fledged young; blue tit, 1 fledgling; song thrush, 1 adult feeding 2 young, 5 fledglings; robin, 1 fledgling; dunnock, 1 fledgling; siskin, 8 adults; willow warbler, 4 fledglings; spotted flycatcher, 1 adult feeding 2 fledglings, wren, 1 fledgling, and house martins feeding chicks in 2 nests."



Notices and Business

Birds New Zealand Research Fund

This important national fund is managed by Birds New Zealand on behalf of a New Zealand Charitable Trust. We invite applications from individuals or organisations prepared to make a difference through ornithological research, with outcomes likely to provide for better management of New Zealand birds or their environment. This year's closing date is 1 September 2016. For details visit www.osnz.org.nz/Birds-New-Zealand-Research-Fund

Request for Dead Seabirds

Lauren Roman from Tasmania is visiting NZ in September, having finally got her permit to dissect seabirds to check for plastic ingestion for her PhD. Can I request people finding reasonably fresh seabirds – petrels, shearwaters, mollymawks, storm petrels, prions – to freeze them? For larger birds, it may be possible to freeze just the crop and gizzard. Nearer the time I can arrange for either Lauren to visit you or for the specimens to be freighted to Invercargill. Thanks very much for your cooperation in this important research project. Plastic ingestion is an issue of growing concern and any data we can get is valuable. Contact me if you can help.

A reminder about beach patrol records. Keep looking and keep sending me your information.

Lloyd Esler ph 032130404

eBird Otago

New Zealand Common Names

As the reviewer for eBird in Otago I have validated 79 observations for the first six months of 2016. The oldest observation is several of Derek's that date back to February 1989. On several occasions I have heard comments that eBird does not use New Zealand common names. Recently I saw a post by Russ Cannings where he outlined how to be sure that you are, as far as possible, you are working with NZ common names. Here's what you do:

- 1) Go to the "My eBird" page.
- 2) Scroll down to the bottom right and under "Account Settings" click "My eBird Preferences."
- 3) Under 'Species Name Display', select "English (New Zealand)."

Macaulay Library eBird Archives

In a recent eBird newsletter I came across this short article on searching more than 850,000 photos, sounds, and videos.

“Last November eBird released the ability to add photos and audio directly to your eBird checklists, archiving these rich media in the Macaulay Library. As of this week, we're pleased to announce that all of these images and recordings that you've worked so hard to get are easily searchable through the eBird/Macaulay Library Media Search. Take a look for yourself—but we don't take any responsibility for the decrease in your productivity! Start searching here.”

Jim Wilson

Ornithological Society of New Zealand

Region: Otago

Annual Accounts: 1 January 2016 - 30 June 2016 Current Account: 03 0903 0392455-00

		2013	2014	2015	2016
Balance as at 1Jan.	\$	845.75	1614.94	1814.18	1777.46
Plus Income:					
Interest		\$0.00	0.00	0.00	
Capitation		\$350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00
Donations/local subs		\$50.00	98.60	103.87	20.00
Transfer from closed conferene account			3.74		
OSNZ Project assistance Grant		\$953.00			
Beca consulting					230.00
Sinclair Wetlands Trust-survey					400.00
Sale of cards		\$0.00		25.00	
		\$1,353.00	452.34	478.87	1000.00
Less Expenses:					
Transfer to savings account	\$	12.00	12.00	12.00	6.00
Bank fees		\$0.00	5.00	5.00	
Room hire		\$0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Envelopes, stamps, photocopying		\$196.68	107.19	193.94	72.75
Speaker Gifts		\$80.91	83.92	99.90	98.00
Book prize-Science Fair		\$44.99	24.99	0.00	
YEP Trust sub		\$0.00	20.00	0.00	
Bittern/morepork study		\$118.76	0.00	143.75	
Spoonbill/redbilled gull study		\$100.00	0.00	0.00	639.00
Sinclair Wetlands survey					360.00
Miscellaneous		\$30.47	0.00	61.00	
		\$583.81	253.10	515.59	1175.75
Closing Balance	\$	1,614.94	1814.18	1777.46	1601.71

Breakdown of Accounts

Running Expenses					
Balance brought forward		618.64			
Income		370			
expenses		176.75			
Balance			811.89		
Other Projects					
Balance brought forward from Falcon		250			
Income		230			
Expenses					
Balance			480.00		
Sinclair Wetlands					
Income		400			
Expenses		360			
Balance			40.00		
Project Account-acoustic					
Balance brought forward		55.82			
Income		0.00			
Expenses					
Balance			55.82		
Spoonbill Project					
Balance brought forward		853.00			
Expenses		639.00			
Balance			214.00		
Total			1601.71		
Bonus Saver account 0309030392455-25					
Balance brought forward		1848.15			
Interest		4.81			
Transfers from cheque		6.00			
transfer for projects		0.00			
Balance			1858.96		

Programme 2016

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held at 7.30pm in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street.

- Wed July 27th** Craig McKenzie. "Birds through the lens."
Followed by AGM and discussion of future projects.
- Wed August 24th** Chris Lalas, Population trend in Otago shags –
fluctuations or decline?
- Sat August 6th** Sinclair Wetlands Winter Survey. Carpool
leaving Dunedin at 9.00 am. To join the team,
organise transport, and for more information
contact Mary 464 0787, maryt@actrix.co.nz
- Wed Sept 28th** Lei Zhu, on "a guide to the birds of China";
Janet Ledingham, "Birds of the Scottish Isles."
- Sat October 15th** Sinclair Wetlands Spring Survey.
- Wed October 26th** Murray Efford on "Urban tui, bellbirds and more."
- Wed November 23** Nic Rawlence and Martyn Kennedy.
"Identification of the Otago Shag".
- Sun November 27th** Summer Wader Count. High tide 15.27 at 2m.
Contact Peter Schweigman
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Many thanks to all who contributed.

Final date for contributions to next newsletter: Aug 18.