



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

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Otago Region Newsletter 8/2010 October 2010

**Special event for our October evening meeting.
Wednesday, 27th October at 7.45 pm at Otago
Museum (meet at main doors of museum)**

I am very pleased to let you know that the tour of the collections of birds and eggs in the basement of the Otago Museum will take place as our special Wednesday evening meeting for October with no cost to OSNZ members. The Museum has waived the usual substantial fee for such tours in recognition of the hugely valuable volunteer work that Peter Schweigman has been doing for well over 15 years at the museum, identifying and cataloguing bird specimens and eggs. So we have a fantastic opportunity to see behind the scenes and into the collection vaults of the museum. Peter will show us the work he does and Cody Fraser, Natural Sciences Collections Curator, will also be there to guide us around.



The Museum would greatly appreciate knowing numbers for this event so they can plan for staff requirements so please can you send me an email if you plan to come. (We are limited to 20 places.)

Thanks. Mary Thompson
maryt@actrix.co.nz

OTAGO HARBOUR SURVEY: AUGUST UPDATE

Here it is the summary for 12 months work: well done to you all.

Here is the normal summary table

Sum of Count				Section				
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
black backed gull	173	2	41	7	84	9	28	344
black swan			3			81	2	86
bullers albatross							1	1
caspian tern							1	1
domestic hen				2				2
godwit							103	103
grey teal						2		2
greylag goose	1				7			8
harrier					1			1
kingfisher			1	1				2
little shag	49	72	85	59	104	36	17	422
mallard	6	47	88	18	12	38	5	214
paradise shelduck	8	2	4	8	2	10	6	40
piec oystercatcher	13				203	6	17	239
piec stilt						2		2
pukeko						12		12
redbilled gull	258	46	93	37	163	66	72	735
rock pigeon	7				4			11
spotted shag		1	2					3
spur winged plover	2		6	2		2	6	18
stewart island shag	1	1			3			5
variable oystercatcher	4		20	4	2	31	1	62
white faced heron		1	2	1	1			5
white fronted tern						2		2

The two hens seen by Audrey and Jill are a new species for the survey.
The shoveler from last month have moved on.

Looking over the data its clear that black billed gull numbers have crashed in the harbour over the last 30 years

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1977/78	2215	10208	14400	260	155	15	0	3	3	91	0	282
1987/88	359	295	103	6	3	9	6	0	0	0	0	3
2009/10	2	0	3	16	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	1

Here are the monthly totals for the survey to date.

Sum of Count Species	Month											
	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
banded dotterel						47	48	43	76			
bellbird						1		1				
black backed gull	255	415	583	1104	410	351	412	380	541	539	631	344
black fronted tern							2	375	119	1		
black shag	3	1		1		3		16		1		
black swan	73	28	4	79	80	137	180	225	296	101	51	86
black-billed gull		30		1	2		3	16				
blackbird		12	2		2				1	4	94	
bullers albatross												1
bullers mollymawk											1	
canada goose		2			7		7		7	9		
caspian tern						2	6	14	4		3	1
crested grebe										1	1	
domestic duck	1		6			5					8	
fowl												2
gannet		2				1			1		1	
godwit	172		16		252	486	388	129	193	10	136	103
goldfinch							4	2				
grey teal					4	2	26	189	230	33	158	2
greylag goose	15	3	9	1	9	10	27	11	8	8	8	8
harrier		1		1			1	2		2		1
kingfisher						1			1	14	5	2
little shag	326	230	155	187	241	396	474	462	863	490	607	422
magpie							1					
mallard	100	110	70	246	402	578	436	453	748	545	568	214
paradise shelduck	23	40	31	62	21	35	40	19	94	83	29	40
pieb oystercatcher	178	237	171	332	526	1146	1017	1103	897	465	630	239
pieb stilt	6	12	7	19	23	13	28	33	50	2	117	2
Pigeon					2		2					
pukeko		1					5			12		12
redbilled gull	994	1038	181	569	1804	778	1020	513	86	865	660	735
rock pigeon	1			2		2	1		2			11
royal spoonbill	2		8	7	4	8	15	3				
shoveler	2		1				6		10	3	51	
skylark											3	
song thrush			2	1								
Sparrows						10						
spotted shag	3	4	272	24	17	16	17	128	19	21	2	3
spur winged plover	1	5	7	30	5	11	13	8	13	25	18	18
stewart island shag	15	15	8	19	5	5	46	33	50	37	10	5
variable	45	34	105	18	71	43	76	87	42	31	76	62
oystercatcher												
welcome swallow				7	8	4			1			
white faced heron	23	19	3	16	3	37	13	19	29	9	3	5
white fronted tern	86	70	229	41	21	16	1022	248	144	7	1	2

News from the Galapagos



Bill & Belly Contemplate

Hanging out at the fishing wharf is rewarding although it is sad to see sharks still coming ashore. Plenty of good sea birds around town and out in the Bolivar Channel alongside Isobella.

Bird highlight is Galapagos Rail that came out one night. I thought NZ birds were confiding. Hardly anything here is wary of humans. Many great views of behaviour. Cannot get a hang of these finches, they are very much sparrows and the species are largely defined by behaviour.

Franny is in fine form and her team a good one. She is away in Colombia today training people in bird conservation. She sends her regards.
Graeme

Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group: Bird Survey

OSNZ has helped this group design appropriate ways of surveying birds in the sections of the peninsula that are going to be targeting for possum control/hopefully eradication to protect the areas biodiversity values. Eight one km walks on Cape Saunders and from Portobello to Taiaroa Head have been mapped and volunteers are to count/ sight birds along these tracks every month. Derek Onley has volunteered his expertise. OSNZ members who live in the area are no doubt already helping with this survey but others may like to be involved; please contact Moira Parker, 478 0214)

Falcon Forays

On 3 October six OSNZ members set off into Akatore forest and were rewarded with locating a falcon 'kekking" in the NW corner of the forest where breeding activity was observed last year. We also had good views of Harrier display flights. Unfortunately the army was conducting exercises with live ammunition in the forest, which meant we couldn't survey the rest of it- another time.

Wenita Forests have asked us to survey part of Mt Allan (near Mosgiel) where logging is planned so areas with breeding falcon can be avoided and Sunday 17th October was planned for this trip. We will need to check again later in spring as it is still fairly early in the breeding season and we may miss some pairs.

Those interested in going on these trips, please contact Steve to be added to the email list.

Steve Lawrence
e-mail: falcol@xtra.co.nz
Ph 03 486 2569

OSNZ Shorebird Project: Godwit Banding in the south.

We have received the following information from Rob Schuckard, who is the Director of this project, about the proposed trip in October. If anyone is interested/able to help please contact Rob 03 5765371 or during trip, 0274518461 or email rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

“We will arrive in Catlins at 20/10 and will set out the nets on 21/10 and 22/10. We are at the Catlins Lake at 21/10 at about 11:30 and at 22/10 at about 12:15, that is about 3hrs prior to high tide

Catching in Awarua at 23, 24, 25 and maybe 26 October. We will make a decision of the catching site when we are there and have a better feel of where the birds do hide. We explored in August a new site, with access from northern end with a small distance to drive over tidal flats. We may well try to catch there instead of the usual hummocks. Tides are roughly between 15:00 and 17:00 when we are there so will set up nets between 12:00 and 14:00. No mist netting planned at this stage.

Around 26 or 27 October we will have a look with low tide in the Dunedin area for marked birds. Unfortunately tides are not high enough for a catch at this time.”

OTAGO HARBOUR SURVEY: SEPTEMBER UPDATE

Here is the first summary for the new survey cycle.

Here is the normal summary table.

Sum of Count Species	Section							7 Grand Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
black backed gull	95	6	21	302	399	308	14	1145	
black shag					1			1	
black swan			2			12	1	15	
blackbird						2		2	
canada goose				3				3	
caspiant tern							3	3	
domestic duck				2				2	
godwit							86	86	
greylag goose			4	4	4			12	
harrier							3	3	
little shag	16	113	80	65	82	62	13	431	
mallard	4	16	52	19	19	33		143	
paradise shelduck	7	2		12	1	6	7	35	
piebald oystercatcher	55		12		154	23	11	255	
pipit							2	2	
pukeko						11		11	
redbilled gull	89	58	41	249	25	715	42	1219	
Sparrows						3		3	
spotted shag		1		1				2	
spur winged plover	3		7	2	2	2		16	
stewart island shag	3	1			2			6	
variable	9		20		3	15	4	51	
oystercatcher									
white faced heron		2	3	1		1	1	8	
white-fronted tern	3			15	3	122		143	

2009 records wanted for Bird Report

Although nothing has yet been done with the 2008 records (so it is not too late to send them in), I thought I'd better start collecting 2009 records for the Annual Bird Report. Could you please send your 2009 sightings to me at 48 Pacific Street, Dunedin. I would appreciate receiving them even if they have been in the newsletter, as the newsletter does not always include information such as the date or the observer's name.

Thanking you in anticipation,
Alan Baker, Regional Recorder

Here are the monthly totals for the September last year and this year.

.	2009/10	2010/11
black backed gull	255	1145
black shag	3	1
black swan	73	15
blackbird		2
canada goose		3
caspian tern		3
domestic duck	1	2
godwit	172	86
greylag goose	15	12
harrier		3
little shag	326	431
mallard	100	143
paradise shelduck	23	35
piebald oystercatcher	178	255
piebald stilt	6	
pipit		2
pukeko		11
redbilled gull	994	1219
rock pigeon	1	
royal spoonbill	2	
shoveler	2	
Sparrows		3
spotted shag	3	2
spur winged plover	1	16
stewart island shag	15	6
variable oystercatcher	45	51
white faced heron	23	8
white-fronted tern	86	143

Gull numbers are up a bit. As are little shag and piebald oystercatcher.



A Common Sandpiper in or near Dunedin, photographed by an Australian visitor.

From last years work here is a summary of bird totals for the inner and outer harbour

Sum of Count Species	Inner	Outer
banded dotterel		214
black backed gull	2895	3070
black fronted tern	2	495
black shag	23	2
black swan	40	1300
black-billed gull	21	31
canada goose	23	9
caspian tern		30
domestic duck	20	
gannet	3	2
godwit		1885
grey teal	2	642
greylag goose	106	11
kingfisher	6	17
little shag	3190	1663
mallard	2319	2151
paradise shelduck	176	341
piebald oystercatcher	2633	4308
piebald stilt	2	310
pukeko		30
redbilled gull	7191	3685
royal spoonbill	26	21
shoveler	1	72
spotted shag	499	27
spur winged plover	56	98
stewart island shag	170	78
variable oystercatcher	269	421
white faced heron	51	128
white-fronted tern	348	539

It's interesting how compared to previous surveys numbers between inner and out harbours seem a bit more consistent. Or is it an illusion? Both spotted and Stewart Island shags are more likely to be seen in the inner harbour even though they roost at the entrance.

Ornithological Snippets

On 24th July, about 300m from the start of the Millenium track at the Henley end, I saw and heard a fernbird in a small patch of scrub and swamp adjacent to the Tairei river. This is the first time I have seen a fernbird there in about 10 trips over the past 18 months. A falcon is seen on most occasions. Steve Lawrence

August 23rd Louise Foord and Neil Clayton heard two kingfishers at Home on Portobello Road beside Glenfalloch. One was seen in trees above the house, the other in Glenfalloch. Called to each other for some time around lunchtime.

August 25th 3.15pm I went hunting grebe at Kaikurai Estuary but saw none. However, I did see 3 royal spoonbills but couldn't get a decent photo. Sue Odlin

Programme 2010

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street at 8 p.m.

Please be on time: the door will be locked after 8 p.m.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Wed 27 October | Tour of Otago Museum.
Meet at main door of Museum at 7.45 pm (no meeting at Zoology Building this month) |
| Sunday 21 November | Harbour Survey, starting at 2.20 pm
(contact Bruce McKinlay, 454 4555) |
| Wed 24 November | Indoor Meeting Bruce McKinlay
Otago Harbour Survey |
| Sunday 19 December | Harbour Survey |
| Sunday 16 January | Harbour Survey |
| Sunday 23 January | Hawksbury Lagoon Summer Survey, 9.30 am |

Email Newsletters are in glorious colour!

Many of you will have received a pdf copy of this Newsletter by email as well as mail. It is quite a big job to photocopy, collate, address and post the newsletters so if you are happy to receive the newsletter **only by email**, or if you would like to but do not, please send your email address with your request to:

Please send all contributions for the November newsletter to:
Derek Onley, c/o Blueskin Store, Waitati, 9060
derekonley@yahoo.com

Many thanks to all who contributed.
Final date for copy for next newsletter: 16 November

OTAGO HARBOUR SURVEY 2010-2011

Introduction

The aim of this survey is to record the pattern of bird distribution and numbers on the Otago Harbour at High tide for the second consecutive year. The Otago Region of the OSNZ previously undertook this survey in 1977/78 and 1988/89 and completing it for a fourth time will enable us to compare the pattern across three decades. The survey not only records the distribution of the birds on the harbour but also any seasonal changes that occur.

Method

The harbour has been divided up into seven sections, which are to be counted monthly in about two hours by two people. The following dates and time have been selected for the 2009/10 survey. The start time for the survey is two hours **BEFORE** the high tide time listed below.

Month Date	High Tide
Nov 21	1620
Dec 19	1508
Jan 16	1350
Feb 13	1222
Mar 20	1712
Apr 17	1459
May 15	1346
June 12	1346
July 10	1119
Aug 14	1612

Counting can begin two hours before high tide at the Dunedin wharves and should be completed as quickly as possible for each section. We want as near as possible to a simultaneous count and so each set of counters needs to keep on the move through their Section. There is no purpose to be gained by stopping in your Section to allow for numbers to build up in your count.

Before starting your Section you need to be sure of the boundaries of your Section. This includes the boundaries for any subsections in your section.

Start your count as close to the above time as possible and finish as quickly as possible.

Please make sure you have:

- A set of the instructions
- A data sheet or notebook
- A map of your sections
- A pair of Binoculars
- A driver

Count all birds on the shore, and on or over the water. If birds are too far out to identify positively record them and your description of them in the space at the bottom of the recording sheet. Someone in the opposite section may have had a better view of them.

Record locations and numbers of obvious seabirds behind the shoreline (e.g. on Logan Park) in the space at the bottom of the recording sheet. Note the time and direction of any notable species or wader flock passing from your section to another. Also please note any wader flock that fly off over the Peninsula or north up the coast. Estimate flocks as best you can in proper numbers, not in the form 100-1000.

Make two copies of your record and send one of them to Bruce McKinlay at either: 97 Tomahawk Road Dunedin or mckinlaywakelin@actrix.co.nz Keep one copy in case the other goes astray.

Keep in contact with the counters on neighbouring Sections prior to and after the survey each month to discuss any potential overlap.

Any questions please ask.

Many Thanks for you help.

Bruce McKinlay