

2015 Birds New Zealand Youth Camp - Mana Island - Trip Report



Now referred to as the Matiu/Mana Field Camp! Atrocious weather led to a change of plans and the first two nights were spent on Matiu-Somes Island in Wellington Harbour as the boat was unable to get to Mana due to strong winds. We relocated 11 teens and 8 supporting adults to Mana on Day 3. We had rain for about 80% of the camp. Light rain/drizzle was rapidly redefined as “good” weather!

Main activities were :

- Bird observation/ identification and field notes throughout – led by Ian Southey*
- Penguin handling to check for flipper bands, web tags, transponders – on Matiu, led by Graeme Taylor & Shane Cotter*
- Sooty Shearwater chick banding/measurement – Mana - led by Graeme Taylor & Shane Cotter*

Mist netting and banding, took weights, measurements and moult scores - (mostly passerines) – Matiu & Mana – led by Peter Reese, assisted by Lynn Adams, Paul Cuming

In addition – night walks for tuatara (Matiu) and kiwi (Mana – Rowi) spotting, as well as gecko and skink hunting were highlights for many. Giant weta (Matiu), and flax weevil (Mana) got variable responses!

Hands-on activities were the most valued – the teens were there for experiences rather than information. They were usually given a choice of activities, as this allowed us to have smaller groups working in parallel. This was appreciated as it gave them some input and “felt less like school”. There was considerable variation in skills and experience with most of those attending having limited bird knowledge on arrival, so some planned activities (five minute bird counts) were dropped. There was very clear improvements in participants knowledge and enthusiasm by the end fo the trip. Despite the weather everyone enjoyed themselves and some useful data was collected. All those teenagers attending think we should definitely run more camps (as well as weekends and day trips), they enjoyed the experience of adults, the range of activities, the use of special places such as island, and especially enjoyed sharing these experiences with other younger people.