More sap feeding by the Kaka

Two types of sap-feeding behaviour have been observed in the Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*) – first, where kaka strip the bark from trees and lick the sap exudate from the surface (Buller 1888, Beggs 1988), and secondly where kaka actively "tap" sap by exposing "trapdoors" into the cambium of certain trees (O'Donnell & Dilks 1989). Since recording the details of this unusual behaviour (O'Donnell & Dilks 1989) some further records have been sent to me.

1. On Little Barrier Island on 4 January 1991, David Lawrie and Bridget Lowe observed a Kaka stripping short sections of bark from the trunk of a tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) tree and then lapping at the moist exposed cambium.
2. Also on Little Barrier Island between 1987 and 1989, Terry Greene and Alan Tennyson both reported finding a hybrid rata/pohutukawa (*Metrosideros robusta/M. excelsa*) tree covered with horizontal scars indicative of sap feeding. Neither observer saw the scars on any other trees on the island, including the areas with groves of pohutukawa where large numbers of Kaka feed on nectar. However, in 1991-1992, Phil Knightbridge, who checked many rata trees while studying their ecology, reported that the sap-feeding scars were more widespread than previously thought, although not abundant.
3. Ralph Allen noted sap-feeding trapdoors in southern rata (*M. umbellata*) trees in the Hunters Hills in the Catlins region between 1979 and 1982. Only single Kaka have been recorded in the Catlins since the early 1960s (Buckingham 1987). Ralph further noted that it is possible that the feeding marks could have dated from the pre-European period, because they were on large (>100 cm dbh) trees which would have increased little in diameter since then.
4. Observations by Ron Tindal indicated that, on Stewart Island, rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) was the dominant species used for tapping sap, although some sign was also present on southern rata. He has also seen the characteristic sap-feeding trapdoors on the trunks of tree daisies (*Olearia colensoi* and *O. angustifolia*). Extensive bark stripping was recorded on mountain totara (*Podocarpus cunninghamii*) and the introduced macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) around Oban, indicating that sap from these species may also be taken.

Sap-feeding by Kaka has now been recorded widely in the North and South Islands and on three offshore islands. While widespread, the specialised sap-feeding behaviour appears not to be common and is probably limited to a few plant species. Sap-feeding scars appear to be less frequent in northern forests, possibly because northern forests have a greater diversity of food plants, including high-energy food sources which are more easily accessible in winter. Sap-feeding sign probably persits for many years and may be seen in forests where Kaka are now rare or absent.

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NOTICE

HYDROBATIDAE 27 : OPPOSITION 2

By this margin the Commission on Zoological Nomenclature voted on Opinion 1696 to conserve the family name HYDROBATIDAE for the Storm Petrels (Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature 49: 250-251, September 1992).

Thus this name should be restored in the 1990 Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand (3rd ed.) on page 56, to replace OCEANITIDAE, but the name OCEANITINAE is available for a subfamily so the subfamily names and arrangement of the Storm Petrels is unchanged.