

SHORT NOTE

Longevity of a whitehead (*Mohoua albicilla*) on Tiritiri Matangi Island

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At c.0800 h on 6 Nov 2006, PB and TC caught a whitehead (*Mohoua albicilla*) while mist-netting on Tiritiri Matangi I, Hauraki Gulf, North I, New Zealand. The net was set in "Bush 1", on the northwestern side of the island. The bird carried a metal band (B57955) and 2 (green, blue) faded, inter-twined wrap-around plastic bands: the band combination could have been either metal-GB or metal-BG. It was thought to be male because it had a bright white head (Gill & McLean 1986) and an enlarged cloacal area.

The only whiteheads that had been banded recently on the island had all been processed by NL and received split colour bands. We therefore thought that this whitehead was from the original trans-located population which was transferred to Tiritiri Matangi I from Little Barrier I in 1989 and 1990, which would mean that it was at least 16 years old.

The (New Zealand) Department of Conservation banding office records show that it was caught as a juvenile of unknown sex by D.G. Allen on Tiritiri Matangi I on 30 Mar 1991. When re-captured in Nov 2006, it was therefore at least 15 years 7 months old. The oldest whitehead known to date is a bird of 16 years 0 months on Little Barrier I (Southey & Gill 2003), which was nearly twice the previous oldest

age of 8 years 7 months for another Little Barrier I bird (Gill 1993).

In contrast to both these previous longevity records, the Tiritiri Matangi I bird was captured and handled, and positively identified by its metal band number. This bird is the oldest known whitehead in a trans-located population in an area free of mammalian predators.

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