

SEABIRDS FOUND DEAD IN NEW ZEALAND IN 1980

By C. R. VEITCH

ABSTRACT

During 1980, 2736 km of coast were patrolled by 146 members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand and their friends. 4351 dead seabirds were found. There were no major wrecks. During one patrol Sooty Shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*) were found at a rate of 68.5 per kilometre. Unusual finds were: Eastern Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*), Grey Ternlet (*Procelsterna cerulea*), Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*), and Yellow-nosed Mollymawk (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*), which is also a new record for the Beach Patrol Scheme.

INTRODUCTION

This paper records the results of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand's Beach Patrol Scheme for 1980. The coastline of New Zealand is divided into 15 sections (Imber & Boeson 1969) with an additional grouping "OI" for Outlying Islands, which this year includes patrols from the Chatham Islands. This year, patrols were carried out on all sections of coast except Fiordland. 467 Beach Patrol Cards and 21 Specimen Record Cards were filed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The numbers of birds found and kilometres of beach travelled and covered per month and per coast are recorded in Table 1. The total distance travelled (3226 km) is below average for recent years (1970-79 ave 3654 km) and the lowest recorded since the 1973 distance of 2737 km. The total number of birds found (4351) is the lowest since the 1972 total of 4046. The average number of birds found per kilometre of coast covered monthly (1.59) is lower than the previous 20 years' average of 2.49.

Kilometres travelled (Table 1) are the total lengths of coast patrolled; kilometres covered are the lengths of coast covered monthly. Hence, if a kilometre of beach is patrolled three times in 1 month, 3 km have been travelled but only 1 km covered per month.

Monthly and coastal distribution of the less common birds is given in Table 2 and of the more common birds in Tables 3 and 4.

There were no large wrecks this year. In January many juvenile Red-billed Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*) were found on one beach at Kaikoura (CN). Such mortality can be expected at this time of year.

TABLE 1 — Numbers of dead seabirds recorded and kilometres patrolled on each coast in 1980.

COAST	CODE		MONTH												TOTALS		BIRDS/KM /CGAST
			JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	KM	BIRDS	
AUCKLAND WEST	AW	KM	84	58	61	90	126	124	100	211	102	84	95	104	1239	2116	1.71
		BIRDS	103	70	69	84	862	95	96	186	38	78	244	197			
TARANAKI	TA	KM	2	7	0	4	12	6	3	25	18	5	9	2	101	96	0.95
		BIRDS	0	10	3	1	11	9	2	27	12	4	15	2			
WELLINGTON WEST	WW	KM	42	12	3	6	23	17	47	12	22	27	16	1	228	227	0.99
		BIRDS	14	22	5	0	25	9	31	3	44	28	43	3			
WESTLAND	WD	KM	7	-	-	9	2	-	3	-	-	-	5	-	26	2	0.08
		BIRDS	0	-	-	0	0	-	1	-	-	-	1	-			
AUCKLAND EAST	AE	KM	64	62	49	37	46	44	40	21	36	50	29	50	528	662	1.25
		BIRDS	93	166	51	48	69	20	24	9	17	25	29	111			
BAY OF PLENTY	BP	KM	2	4	2	1	18	13	13	1	1	-	-	9	64	119	1.84
		BIRDS	3	7	0	0	30	13	31	0	0	-	-	35			
EAST COAST NI	EC	KM	3	-	-	3	2	3	-	2	3	15	3	4	38	11	0.29
		BIRDS	3	-	-	0	0	3	-	0	0	2	0	3			
WAIRARAPA	WA	KM	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	12	7	0.58
		BIRDS	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6			
CANTERBURY NORTH	CN	KM	8	-	5	-	7	20	2	22	7	6	-	4	81	222	2.74
		BIRDS	109	-	2	-	3	28	2	24	1	9	-	44			
CANTERBURY SOUTH	CS	KM	7	6	7	6	7	9	19	9	7	6	6	8	97	150	1.55
		BIRDS	5	16	6	7	57	14	11	11	6	3	7	7			
OTAGO	OT	KM	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	6	30	5.00
		BIRDS	9	-	-	1	-	12	-	-	7	-	-	1			
SOUTHLAND	SD	KM	8	7	-	12	9	6	-	1	7	13	10	13	86	480	5.58
		BIRDS	1	9	-	426	1	0	-	1	0	8	1	33			
WELLINGTON SOUTH	WS	KM	25	8	39	19	9	19	7	16	-	17	27	9	195	156	0.77
		BIRDS	12	3	20	12	14	13	10	44	-	4	19	5			
NORTH COAST SI	NS	KM	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	-	-	11	45	4.09
		BIRDS	20	-	-	-	-	-	2	23	-	-	-	-			
OUTLYING ISLANDS	OI	KM	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	24	20	1.17
		BIRDS	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-			
TOTAL KILOMETRES TRAVELLED			269	207	237	246	279	308	262	395	230	228	207	258	3226		
TOTAL KILOMETRES COVERED			260	170	174	188	261	262	235	346	204	223	200	213	2736		
TOTAL SEABIRDS RECORDED			373	320	156	579	1072	216	210	339	125	161	359	441		4351	
BIRDS/KM COVERED/MONTH			1.43	1.88	0.90	3.08	4.11	0.82	0.89	0.98	0.61	0.72	1.80	2.07		1.59	

No patrols were reported from Fiordland.

TABLE 2 — Seabirds of which 1 to 5 specimens were found dead in 1980.

SPECIES OR SUBSPECIES	NUMBER FOUND	COAST(S)	MONTH(S)
<i>Megadyptes antipodes</i>	2	WV,BP.	MAY,JUL.
<i>Eudyptes pachyrhynchus</i>	1	CS.	JUL.
<i>sclateri</i>	1	WV.	SEP.
<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>	2	AW,WS.	MAR,MAY.
<i>melanophrys</i>	3	AW(3).	DEC(3).
<i>chlororhynchus</i>	2	AW(2).	MAY,AUG.
<i>cauta salvini</i>	1	WS.	JAN.
<i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i>	4	AW(4).	MAY,AUG,SEP(2).
<i>Fulmarus glacialisoides</i>	5	AW(3),SD,OI.	AUG,OCT,NOV(2),DEC.
<i>Pterodroma</i> spp*	3	AW(2),AE.	JAN,MAR,AUG.
<i>pycrofti</i>	2	AE,EC.	JUN,NOV.
<i>leucoptera</i>	1	AW.	MAY.
<i>Pachyptila crassirostris</i>	1	WS.	AUG.
<i>Procellaria cinerea</i>	1	AW.	SEP.
<i>westlandica</i>	3	AW(3).	JAN,MAY,SEP.
<i>aequinoctialis</i>	3	AW(2),EC.	OCT,NOV,DEC.
<i>Puffinus</i> spp*	5	AW(3),AE,OT.	JAN,JUN,NOV(3).
<i>gavia/huttoni</i>	2	EC,CN.	AUG,OCT.
<i>Garradina nereis</i>	2	AW,CN.	DEC(2).
<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	1	AW.	APR.
<i>Phalacrocorax</i> spp*	1	AW.	AUG.
<i>sulcirostris</i>	3	AW(2),AE.	MAY(2),JUN.
<i>m. brevirostris</i>	1	BP.	DEC.
<i>Stercorarius skua lonnbergi</i>	1	AW.	NOV.
<i>parasiticus</i>	2	AW(2).	APR,NOV.
<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	1	AW.	DEC.
<i>fuscata</i>	5	AW(5).	JAN,MAR(4).
<i>Procelsterna cerulea</i>	1	AW.	MAR.

TOTAL 60

* Species could not be identified by the patroller.

In February and December, higher numbers of Blue Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) than normal were found on Auckland East beaches. There is no obvious reason for this. During most of December, there were offshore winds.

During April, Sooty Shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*) were found during one patrol of 6 km of Oreti Beach (SD) at a rate of 68.5 per kilometre. This is the highest ever recovery rate of dead birds found on New Zealand beaches. Mortality of fledglings may be expected at this time. It appears that a combination of periods of calm weather followed by south-west winds brought large numbers of dead birds to this beach. After this, fewer dead Sooty Shearwaters than normal were found on other beaches, and the total for April and May was about average. The expected November/December wreck of Sooty Shearwaters did occur, but fewer birds than average were found.

Other high numbers of birds found may be attributed to patrols on new beaches or, occasionally, to human activity, e.g. in May 39 Spotted Shags (*Stictocarbo punctatus*) were found shot on one Canterbury South beach. (Appropriate law enforcement agencies were notified.)

The Gould's Petrel (*Pterodroma leucoptera*) found at Port Waikato (AW) in May is the eighth specimen of this species to be

TABLE 3 — Coastal distribution of the more common seabirds found dead in 1980.

SPECIES OR SUBSPECIES	AW	TA	WW	WD	AE	BP	EC	COAST				SD	WS	NS	OI	TOTAL BIRDS	
								WA	CN	CS	OT						
<i>Eudvetula minor</i> subsp* <i>albolineata</i>	203 —	14 —	7 —	1 —	222 —	28 —	1 —	— —	1 4	— 3	— —	6 —	11 —	1 —	4 —	499 7	
<i>Diomedea</i> spp* <i>exulans</i> <i>chrysostoma</i> <i>bulleri</i> <i>cauta</i> subsp* <i>cauta</i>	5 3 12 6 11 15	1 1 — — 2 1	2 — 3 — 2 4	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	— — — 1 — —	— — — 1 — —	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	— — — — 1 —	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	— — — — — —	8 6 17 9 14 26
<i>Macronectes</i> spp* <i>Daption capense</i> <i>Pterodroma macroptera</i> <i>lessonii</i> <i>inexpectata</i> <i>brevirostris</i> <i>cookii</i> <i>nigripennis</i>	23 9 17 35 26 18 5 6	2 2 2 2 — — — —	5 3 — 1 — 6 —	— — — — — — — —	— 2 7 — 1 — 17 1	— — 4 — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	32 24 30 39 31 26 22 7
<i>Halobaena caerulea</i> <i>Pachyptila</i> spp* <i>vittata</i> <i>salvini</i> <i>desolata</i> <i>belcheri</i> <i>turtur</i>	17 41 6 10 12 35 125	3 6 — — — — 5	1 39 1 1 — 1 57	— 1 — — — — —	1 3 — 1 — 1 18	1 — — — — — 4	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— 2 — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	— — — — — — —	24 100 25 14 14 43 237
<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i> <i>Puffinus carneipes</i> <i>bulleri</i> <i>eriseus</i> <i>tenuirostris</i> <i>gavia</i> <i>huttoni</i> <i>assimilis</i>	— 7 78 955 37 89 12 18	— — — 10 1 9 — —	— — 5 30 2 — 5 —	— — — — — — — —	— 6 7 49 2 94 1 6	— 77 20 26 — 6 — 3	— — 5 1 — 2 — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — —	7 91 117 1536 54 232 20 27
<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i> <i>Sula bassana</i> <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> <i>varius</i> <i>Leucocarbo chalconotus</i> <i>Stictocarbo punctatus</i> <i>Larus dominicanus</i> <i>n. scopulinus</i> <i>bulleri</i> <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> <i>Sterna striata</i>	22 89 1 2 7 58 33 — 5 18	1 3 1 — — 16 4 — — 3	9 2 2 — — 28 — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	20 34 — 5 — 26 31 — 3 5	6 2 — 3 — 8 2 — 1 2	— — — — — 1 — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — —	68 136 9 14 8 158 263 205 9 9 59
TOTALS	2076	96	225	2	658	117	8	7	220	149	29	479	153	45	27	4291	

* Species or subspecies could not be identified by the patroller.

TABLE 4 — Monthly distribution of the more common seabirds found dead in 1980.

SPECIES OR SUBSPECIES	MONTH												TOTAL BIRDS
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
<i>Eudypula minor</i> subssp*	65	109	43	51	26	22	8	22	2	8	14	127	499
<i>albosignata</i>	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	7
<i>Diomedea</i> spp*	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	2	-	8
<i>exulans</i>	1	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
<i>chrystostoma</i>	-	1	-	-	-	3	2	5	1	2	-	3	17
<i>bulleri</i>	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	9
<i>cauta</i> subssp*	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	1	3	-	1	14
<i>cauta</i>	3	-	-	3	1	5	4	1	-	2	3	3	26
<i>Macronectes</i> spp*	-	2	-	-	2	2	7	16	1	1	1	-	32
<i>Daption capense</i>	1	1	1	-	-	-	4	11	-	5	-	1	24
<i>Pterodroma</i> macroptera	2	-	-	2	4	5	2	8	1	-	2	4	30
<i>lessonii</i>	-	-	2	5	-	4	1	2	2	11	11	1	39
<i>inexpectata</i>	3	2	3	2	4	2	-	-	1	-	7	7	31
<i>brevirostris</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	14	6	1	-	26
<i>cookii</i>	1	5	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	22
<i>nidripennis</i>	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	7
<i>Halobaena caerulea</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	8	4	6	1	1	24
<i>Pachyptila</i> spp*	2	1	1	-	8	2	9	24	20	8	21	4	100
<i>vittata</i>	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	14	1	-	1	4	25
<i>salvini</i>	-	-	-	1	3	-	1	4	-	2	1	2	14
<i>desolata</i>	1	-	-	-	6	-	4	2	-	-	1	-	14
<i>belcheri</i>	1	-	-	-	2	8	26	5	1	-	-	-	43
<i>turtur</i>	6	13	1	1	8	2	38	67	25	18	36	22	237
<i>Procellaria parkinsoni</i>	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	7
<i>Puffinus carneipes</i>	6	19	10	3	30	3	-	-	-	1	9	10	91
<i>bulleri</i>	7	14	1	2	9	4	1	-	-	12	46	21	117
<i>griseus</i>	26	9	13	430	819	44	15	6	4	2	112	56	1536
<i>tenuirostris</i>	12	3	-	-	5	5	-	1	1	18	6	3	54
<i>gavia</i>	39	37	10	13	22	13	17	28	13	11	18	11	232
<i>huttoni</i>	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	7	6	3	20
<i>assimilis</i>	1	2	1	-	3	2	3	-	-	-	5	10	27
<i>Peleodroma marina</i>	6	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	15
<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>	19	2	-	1	5	1	7	8	5	5	1	14	68
<i>Sula bassana</i>	10	41	13	14	4	5	3	3	3	5	11	24	136
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2	-	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	1	-	-	9
<i>varius</i>	-	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	-	-	2	14
<i>Leucocarbo chalconotus</i>	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	2	-	-	1	8
<i>Stictocarbo punctatus</i>	17	15	5	4	49	14	7	12	4	3	2	26	158
<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	19	25	12	13	20	37	23	37	11	14	23	29	263
<i>n. scopulinus</i>	91	8	17	9	14	14	5	13	6	2	5	21	205
<i>bulleri</i>	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	1	9
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	-	1	4	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
<i>Sterna striata</i>	21	5	6	3	7	2	1	2	1	4	3	4	59
TOTALS	368	320	149	577	1064	213	208	332	120	158	350	432	4291

* Species or subspecies could not be identified by the patroller.

1982

SEABIRDS 1980

45

recorded in the Beach Patrol Scheme. Previous records are: 1946, AW, 1; 1961, WW, 1; 1970, AW, 1; 1971, AW, 1, AE, 1; 1973, AW, 1; and 1975, AW, 1.

Third and fourth specimens were found of Eastern Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and Grey Ternlet (*Procelsterna cerulea*) respectively. However, in relation to the numbers of these species known to be near our coasts, such finds should be expected.

The Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) found on Muriwai Beach (AW) in April is the second one recorded by the Beach Patrol Scheme. The previous record was from Te Werahi Beach (AE) in January 1971.

The two specimens of Yellow-nosed Mollymawk (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*), one found on the Awhitu Peninsula (AW) in May and the other on Ninety Mile Beach (AW) in August, are new records for the Beach Patrol Scheme. This species is occasionally seen at sea about northern New Zealand (Falla 1979) and one was found on Muriwai Beach about 1930 (Oliver 1930).

Miscellaneous birds recorded, but not considered to be seabirds, totalled 173. These were: 29 Magpies, 22 Rock Pigeons, 17 Mallard Ducks, 14 Black Swans, 12 Blackbirds, 11 Variable Oystercatchers, eight Song Thrushes, seven Grey Ducks and Starlings, six South Island Pied Oystercatchers, five Harriers, four Mynas, three Pukeko, two each of White-faced Herons, Reef Herons, Domestic Geese, Pied Stilts, Pheasants, Tuis and Greenfinches, and one each of Cattle Egret, North Island Weka, Kaka, Shining Cuckoo, Long-tailed Cuckoo, Morepork, Little Owl, Spine-tailed Swift, Skylark, Hedge-sparrow, Silvereye, Cirl Bunting, Chaffinch and Goldfinch.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 1980 is due to the people listed below, who are known to have taken part, and all others who took part but whose names were not entered on the cards.

J. Ackley, B. R. Armstrong, Auckland team, H. Ayers, J. Ballantyne, M. Barlow, M. Barnes, D. J. Bettesworth, D. Bettridge, K. Bond, D. F. Booth, D. Brannigan, K. Brash, K. Butler, D. Brathwaite, B. A. Calder, W. & J. Campbell, W. Cash, J. Charteris, C. & N. G. Cheshire, J. Cockrem, R. M. & S. Cotter, P. Cozens, S. & B. Creswell, D. & R. Crockett, P. Crombie, L. Davies, G. S. Dumbell, H. Eagles, G. Eller, B. Elliott, R. P. Featherston, J. F. M. & J. S. Fennel, M. Field, C. A. Fleming, P. Fooks, M. Friedlander, R. Froggatt, E. Frisby, R. B. Goffin, D. Goodale, A. & A. Gordon, E. & D. Graham, S. Grant, R. Grayden, E. Grundy, A. Habraken, H. Hagen, M. Hansby, B., E., R. & T. Harlow, M. Harrison, B. Hartley, T. Hatch, J. Hawken, N. R. Hellyer, V. Hensley, J. Hilliard, R. Hoare, R. Holdaway, P. Horn, D. C. Horne, R. Howarth, L. & A. V. Howell, M. J. Imber, J. R. Jackson, S. Jenkins, A. B. Jones, E. J. Jones, M. Kearns, P. Kearton, R. E. Lambert, M. Lane, D. A. Lawrie, B. & M. Lindsay, F. McCormick,

A. MacDonald, F. Malcolm, M. Marchant, R. Mayhill, D. G. & J. C. Medway, P. & K. Miller, C. Miskelly, J. Morrison, C. & H. O'Donnell, R. Odgers, K. Parkinson, R. & S. Parrish, C. Pinkney, S. Pitt, B. & A. Poulton, R. G. Powlesland, M. Quinn, S. Reed, B. & M. Ringer, A. Roberts, B. Robinson, N. Rothwell, P. M. Sagar, C. Schischka, B. Searle, M. D. Seccombe, D. Shand, L. Silcock, D. Sim, N. Skitt, R. S. Slack, I. Southey, J. E. Squire, D. Stanley, B. Stephens, G. Strachan, R. R. Sutton, M. K. Tarburton, K. V. Todd, T. & R. Thomas, B. Trott, C. R. Veitch, M. E. Wallis, D. Walter, N. J. Ward, C. & D. Watkins, R. W. Wheeler, P. Winter, T. H. Worthy, A. Young.

E & OE

I am also personally indebted to B. D. Bell, R. G. Powlesland and R. B. Sibson for their helpful comments during the preparation of this paper.

LITERATURE CITED

- FALLA, R. A. 1979. In Falla, R. A.; Sibson, R. B.; Turbott, E. G. 1979. A new guide to the birds of New Zealand. Collins.
 IMBER, M. J.; BOESON, B. W. 1969. Seabirds found dead in New Zealand in 1964. *Notornis* 16: 50-56.
 OLIVER, W. R. B. 1930. New Zealand birds. Wellington: Fine Arts (NZ) Ltd.

C. R. VEITCH, *Wildlife Service, Department of Internal Affairs, P.O. Box 2220, Auckland*



SHORT NOTE

ARCTIC TERN IN MANUKAU HARBOUR

On the afternoon of 26 November 1980, Beth Brown, R. N. Thomas, A. Habraken and I met at Mangere beside No. 4 pond, Auckland Metropolitan Drainage Board, where three days before RNT had reported the sighting of a Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*). The day was very blustery and near full tide strong squalls were carrying spray over the Onehunga-Mangere bridge. In the lee of Puketutu Island 4 or 5 White-fronted Terns (*Sterna striata*) were fishing a channel which they commonly use in such westerly weather. Among them and sometimes harassed by them was a slightly smaller tern, showing greyish back and upper wing surface and a near-white rump and tail, deeply forked. It was a typical *Sterna*, not a tern of the *Chlidonias* persuasion. The stranger was taking a buffeting and tried to avoid the wind by settling among the scoria on the sea-wall road, where RNT was able to back the car within 10 m of it.

Some obvious features which we noticed at once were: bill black; crown and cap blackish brown at first glance, but moult starting and grey streaks beginning to appear; some breast feathers were dark with wet but lightened as they dried; for a while there seemed to be a white band almost round the lower neck contrasting with the grey of the nape and the mantle; legs coral red and very short; underparts and underwing white, not grey; wings long, slender and angular;