Birds New Zealand – OSNZ National Wader Census June - July 2022 November - December 2022 Summary compiled by Adrian Riegen

Winter Census 2022

A total of 99,553 waders of 20 species were counted during the June-July 2022 wader census, (Table 1), down from 104,073 waders of 21 species counted in June-July 2021. The lower number can be accounted for by some major areas not being counted, including Parengarenga, Houhora and Rangaunu Harbours in the Far North and the North Kaipara Harbour, Tauranga Harbour, Maketu in the Bay of Plenty and Raglan, Aotea and Kawhia Harbours in the Waikato. The main reasons for these not being counted, was lack of people, persistent bad weather and lack of boats. Therefore, making direct comparisons with previous years is problematic. It is hoped that favorable weather, an abundance of people and boats in 2023 will lead to better results.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher numbers have been declining steadily over recent years but the winter 2022 count of 56,074 was close to the 2021 count of 56,323 in spite of key sites not being counted. Variable Oystercatcher numbers were lower in 2022 with 3,792 counted compared to the 4,439 counted in 2021. However, this is probably accounted for by the lack of counts from the Bay of Plenty in 2022. That region counted 711 in 2021. The Variable Oystercatcher count is not a true reflection of the total population as many stay on the breeding grounds during winter and are not counted. Bar-tailed Godwit numbers were up slightly at 10,231 compared to 9,859 in 2021. The number could have been about 1,000 higher if the Waikato and Bay of Plenty sites had been counted.

The Banded Dotterel count of 4,926 was close to the 2021 count of 4,797, which was the lowest since 2013. Only the Southern New Zealand Dotterels that move to the South Island in the winter were counted and the 45 counted in 2022 was one up from the 2021 count.

Red Knot numbers were the lowest recorded in winter at just 632, even though all Red Knot sites except the Far North (last counted June 2017) were counted. The Ruddy Turnstone count of 106 was the lowest since 2007 when 66 were counted.

Uncommon winter waders included, 2 Lesser Sand Plover and one each of Sanderling, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Hudsonian Godwit and Terek Sandpiper.

Summer Census 2022

A total of 128,274 waders of 26 species were counted during the November-December 2022 wader census, (Table 2), compared to 122,016 counted in 2021. This was the second lowest count since full coverage was reinstated in 2006 even though national coverage was good with only the key Far North sites not counted. Coverage of some smaller areas particularly along Auckland's east coast are increasingly well covered and although numbers at each site may not be particularly high, these counts do at least show the importance of small sites for a range of wader species, particularly Bar-tailed Godwit, Pied and Variable Oystercatchers and New Zealand Dotterel.

The Coromandel, which is particularly good for the aforementioned species is still infrequently counted and it would be valuable if these sites were regularly counted.

Bar-tailed Godwit numbers were significantly higher in 2022 at 81,769 compared to 65,859 in 2021 and this is the highest count since 2013. Perhaps boosted by a higher number of juveniles this year.

The 632 Red Knot counted in the winter is reflected in the summer count of 21,657 and is the lowest summer count. As the key Red Knot sites have been counted every year since 1983 and some since 1960, this is a worrying trend. The only Red Knot sites not counted in 2022 were the three Far North harbours, which have not been fully counted since 2019. Strongholds for Red Knots continue to be Farewell Spit 8,105 (8,751 in 2021), Kaipara Harbour 5,935 (5,862), Manukau Harbour 3,950 (7,834), Firth of Thames 2,099 (2,850) and Tasman Bay 715 (932), which together account for 96% of all Red Knots counted.

Ruddy Turnstone numbers were up at 1,403 compared to 1,309 in 2021. The strongholds for Ruddy Turnstone were Farewell Spit with 415, Kaipara Harbour 293, Manukau Harbour 277, Tasman Bay 205 and Southland 115.

Red-necked Stint numbers were down to 42 and still well down on historical numbers. This summer slightly more Pacific Golden Plover were counted with 162, compared to 156 in summer 2021.

Only 13 Whimbrel were counted, down from 27 in 2021 and 47 in 2020. The only other Arctic wader to reach double figures was Sharp-tailed Sandpiper with 10 individuals counted.

Uncommon summer waders included; 4 Eastern Curlew, 2 Greater Sand Plover and one each of the following, Sanderling, Curlew Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit, Hudsonian Godwit and Grey-tailed Tattler.

NOTE: Species listed in the following tables follow the order they appear in the fifth edition of The Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand 2022.

Species	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Variable Oystercatcher	3,792	4,439	4,238	4,196	3,307	3,636	3,145
South Island Pied						,	
Oystercatcher	56,074	56,323	68,207	67,327	69,105	73,172	77,951
(Oystercatcher Hybrid)	16	30	23	18	6	15	3
Pied Stilt	15,707	18,008	17,127	16,764	18,621	14,181	17,841
(Black Stilt/Hybrids)	7	12	17	17	6	21	8
Pacific Golden Plover			5				
New Zealand Dotterel	861	1,151	999	1,176	865	777	1,041
Banded Dotterel	4,926	4,797	5,369	6,041	5,100	5,334	5,993
Lesser Sand Plover	2						1
Greater Sand Plover		2	1	2			
Wrybill	5,147	4,100	3,571	4,420	5,325	4,718	4,675
Black-fronted Dotterel	66	240	78	41	93	97	128
Shore Plover							1
Spur-winged Plover	1,980	2,954	1,589	1,891	2,587	2,683	1,970
Eastern Curlew	1	1		3	1	1	
Whimbrel	1	1	31	3	3	2	10
Bar-tailed Godwit	10,231	9,859	12,813	4,864	5,216	7,033	9,997
Black-tailed Godwit			1		1	1	
Hudsonian Godwit	1	1		1			1
Ruddy Turnstone	106	210	410	462	137	322	206
Great Knot				1	1		
Red Knot	632	1,938	1,761	1,020	2,341	1,150	1,763
Ruff			1				
Curlew Sandpiper		1				2	
Red-necked Stint	1	4	36	18	10	5	8
Sanderling	1	1	1	4		2	
Terek Sandpiper	1	1					
Grey-tailed Tattler			1	1		3	1
Marsh Sandpiper							1
Total	99,553	104,073	116,369	108,270	112,725	113,155	124,744

Table 1. Total Wader Count June - July 2022

Table 2. Total Wader Count November - December 2022

Species	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Variable Oystercatcher	2,620	2,438	2,866	2,659	2,679	2,275	2,493
South Island Pied							
Oystercatcher	12,901	15,981	18,708	14,319	13,578	18,978	17,291
(Oystercatcher Hybrid)	23	23	13	22	11	10	9
Pied Stilt	4,838	5,999	6,519	8,218	4,683	5,325	3,818
(Black Stilt/Hybrids)	5	5	6	5	44	5	2
Pacific Golden Plover	175	156	122	224	220	266	112
Grey Plover					1		1
New Zealand Dotterel	518	362	600	568	547	497	522
Banded Dotterel	418	546	597	711	278	664	613
Lesser Sand Plover			1				
Greater Sand Plover	2	5	3	3	1		1
Wrybill	79	200	62	634	348	273	102
Black-fronted Dotterel	30	25	43	25	27	16	18
Shore Plover	1			69			
Spur-winged Plover	1,590	1.937	2,113	1,696	1,001	2,073	1,286
Eastern Curlew	4	4	5	5	2	7	7
Whimbrel	13	27	47	65	18	28	45
Bar-tailed Godwit	81,937	65,859	78,218	74,456	65,345	71,527	72,702
Black-tailed Godwit	1			8		3	
Hudsonian Godwit	1			1	1	2	
Ruddy Turnstone	1,404	1,309	1,688	2,468	1,497	1,934	1,712

Great Knot			1	1			
Red Knot	21,658	27,060	25,698	26,775	33,563	30,947	27,338
Broad-billed Sandpiper				1			
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	10	18	17	9	15	15	16
Curlew Sandpiper	1	2	4	1	1	2	6
Red-necked Stint	42	53	76	87	53	24	134
Sanderling	1	3		3	5	4	3
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	1	1	7	3	1	2
Terek Sandpiper		2		1			
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Wandering Tattler							1
Common Greenshank			1				
Marsh Sandpiper			1	1		2	1
Total	128,937	122,016	137,411	133,031	123,922	134,880	128,236

Wader Count February 2023

A total of 73,392 waders were counted in Northland, Gisborne/Wairoa, and Waikato harbours, Nelson, West Coast and Southland in February 2023. Comparisons are made between the November 2022 and February 2023 counts for Nelson and Southland in Tables 3 & 4.

Table 3. Nelson Region count Nov 2022 and I	Feb 2	2023
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Species	Feb.23	Nov 22
Variable Oystercatcher	728	627
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	22,742	3,234
Pied Stilt	447	60
Pacific Golden Plover	52	26
Banded Dotterel	832	28
Lesser Sand Plover	4	
Greater Sand Plover	1	1
Spur-winged Plover	12	23
Whimbrel	5	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	16,569	17,207
Ruddy Turnstone	705	624
Red Knot	8,575	8,850
TOTAL	51,785	30,681

	Table 4.	Southland	count Nov	2022 and	Feb 2023
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Species	Feb.23	Nov 22
Variable Oystercatcher	166	14
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	3,413	717
Pied Stilt	686	78
Black Stilt/Hybrid	1	
Pacific Golden Plover	2	
New Zealand Dotterel	2	
Banded Dotterel	563	7
Greater Sand Plover		1
Wrybill	1	1
Spur-winged Plover	51	23
Eastern Curlew	1	1
Whimbrel	1	1
Little Whimbrel	1	
Bar-tailed Godwit	4,042	4,407
Ruddy Turnstone	136	115
Red Knot	46	43
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	6	2
Red-necked Stint		5
Grey-tailed Tattler		1
TOTAL	9,118	5,416

Full analysis of the wader counts 2005-2019 can be found in Wader Studies in New Zealand, *Notornis* Vol 67 Part 4, December 2020.

I apologise for the lateness of this report, which is due in part to the long delay in receiving counts from some regions. I would encourage all regional contributors to get their counts to me promptly so that all those who put so much voluntary effort into gathering this data can see the results in a timely manner.

Adrian Riegen June 2023

Birds New Zealand – OSNZ Waterbird Counts 2022

Whilst counting waders, people in most regions also count water and wetland birds and although these data come nowhere near indicating the total numbers for most species they are of interest and do show the diversity of birds using the same habitat as waders. They also show local trends and when species like Canada Goose and Royal Spoonbill first appeared at certain sites and how their numbers have increased. These data are stored on a Birds NZ database and are available on request, subject to conditions. The attached tables show numbers counted in winter and summer 2022.

Adrian Riegen June 2023

		OSNZ	Winte	er Wate	rbird	Cens	us Tot	als 20	22																		
								_															-			-	-
JUNK , JULY 2023		Whangarei	Ruakaka/Waipu	South Kaipara	Mangawhai	Omaha	Auckland East Coast	Waitemata/Tamaki/Whitford	Manukau Harbour	Firth of Thames	Ohiwa	Gisborne/Wairoa	Hawkes Bay	Southern Hawkes Bay	Manawatu	Lake Wairarapa	Tasman Bay	Golden Bay	Farewell Spit	Westhaven Inlet	Kaikoura/Marlborough	Canterbury	Avon-Heathcote	Lake Ellesmere	West Coast	Otago	Southland
Site & Overall Total >>	38,897	3,933	771	3,472	295	49	575	2,321	5,943	4,785	348	194	1,792	456	1,206	4,549	2,715	846	587	20	877	381	31	195	283	2,215	58
Mute Swan	15																					5	_	10		_	_
Black Swan	3,709	26	5	328	10	2	7	249	735	160		47	56	60	6	1,901	38		15		16				2	46	
Greylag Goose	6																									6	
Canada Goose	3,986			337			64	150	666	130		33	1,031	200	85	1,268			16		2				3	1	
Paradise Shelduck	1,802	18	160	805	36	6	69	65	99	210	6	10	12		7	174	23		23		23				9	47	
Grey Teal	581			60					9	28			188		48		21				105					122	
Mallard	2,489	72	43	83	3	9	64	77	427	662	19	1	33		68		396	47	25		12				74	374	
Grey Duck	13								5								8										
Mallard/Grey Duck	9						1						8														
Australasian Shoveler	905			4				7	127	85					58		55		14		515					40	
Northern Shoveler	221											35	186														
New Zealand Scaup	885								79								806										
Great Crested Grebe	8																							8			
Dabchick	136				4				26				42			50	4				10						
White-capped Albatross	10																		10								
Australasian Gannet	51			3		1			18								2		27								
Little Shag	513	1	2	2		1	7	10	70	19	31		31	9			53								6	250	
Black Shag	277				3	2	23		16	44	4	2	19	19	2	108	8									27	
Pied Shag	1,103	18		54	21	1	7	47	142	637	12	3	3	1	48	8	13	3	13						3	25	
Little Black Shag	210	15		1			14	6	55	8			22	13	3	70	2							1			
Otago Shag	153																									153	
Spotted Shag	11																									11	
White Heron	12									1		1				1	1					3	1	2	2		
Cattle Egret	17									6														11			
White-faced Heron	1,363	10		398	4		7	52	309	366	2	20	15	3	9	56	65	19			1				12	5	7
Reef Heron	8		2			1			2																		
Bittern	10									1						8											1
Royal Spoonbill	1,817	49	34	497	6	12	16	35	637	137	21	18	26	8	31	45	85	42		20		17	15	47	17	1	1
Banded Rail	2									2																	
Pukeko	946			250				150	115	331			3				85									12	
Southern Black-backed Gull	4,273	435		105	85	9	49		406	200	88	20	69	137	735	126	370	394	163		118				84	319	
Red-billed Gull	9,735	3,142	249	84	67	5			1,149	1373	134	1	16		46		597	288	229		75					759	
Black-billed Gull	2,006			184			6	12	738	125				2	2	709	35	25	2			104		39	23	\rightarrow	
Little Tern	3			2													1										
Fairy Tern	12		L	10	2																					\rightarrow	
Caspian Tern	705	3	5	115	43		20	22	99	186	5	3	32	4	12	9		27	24			53	5	4	3	4	9
Black-fronted Tern	171		L	1													23		26			43	6	21		12	39
White-fronted Tern	723	141	1	149	8		1		14	74	26				44		6	1				156	4	52	45	1	
Whiskered Tern	1		L																							l	1

		OSN	Z Summer	Waterb	ird Cen	sus Tota	als 20	22																									_				_
NON, OFC POLL		Parenga	Houhora H Rangaunu - Karikari	Whangarei	Ruaka/Waipu	North Kalpara	South Kalpara	Mangawhai		Auckiand East Coast Waitemata/Tamaki/Whi	arbo	Firth of Thames	Coromandel	Tauranga Harbour	Maketu	Ohiwa	Gisborne/Wairoa	Hawkes Bay	Southern Hawkes Bay	Port Waikato	Aotea Harbour	Kawhia Harbour	Raglan Harbour	Whanganui & Others	Manawatu	Lake Wairarapa	Tasman Bay	Golden Bay	Farewell Spit	Westhaven Inlet	Kaikoura/Marlborough	Canterbury	Avon-Heathcote	Lake Ellesmere	West Coast	Otago	Southland
Site & Overall Total >>		0	O O	462	285	0″2,6	507 6	23 9	4 13	1 1,093	4,733	2,927	04	4,061 4	,161	252	597 "	3,171	0 (NC)	° 0'	924	1,948	464	667	75 "3,	679 1	195 "	613 '	293	2 2	,084	3,029	36	553	247	,819	361
Mute Swan	10	ne	ne ne	-		_	-	-	-	-	<u> </u>			-	-	-	-	-	(110)		-	_		-	_		_	-	-			2	-	8	-	-	_
Black Swan	9,501				1		939	4		3 80	2,291	88		658	12		35	464			818	605	2	12	3.	107	32		50		289				11		
Cape Barren Goose	4							-	-	-						-							-					-		-		4	-	-		-	-
Greylag Goose	42								-		2			-	-	-	-	20			-			-		18			-				-	-	-	-	_
Canada Goose	1,507						316	-	-	90	36	20		54	14	-	51	114			6	485	160	2	_	3	4	-	19	_	130		-	-	3	-	-
Paradise Shelduck	1.066				23		269	5 1	0 2	5 80				10	-		8	47			14		12	5		167	8		2		81				70	18	_
Brown Teal	1			-				-	<u> </u>		1.00				-	-	-					-		-	_			-	-				-	-			-
Grey Teal	500									-	2	62		12				59						18			25				322						_
Mallard	1.899	_		1	6		153	13	+-	61	500	325		101	70	13	32	235			12	12	20	13	_		170	3	-		72		_	_	62	25	_
Grey Duck	18			1	-					4	13																	-									_
Mallard/Grey Duck	7	_				_		_	+-	-				-	-		-	7			_	_			_		_	_	-				-	_	-	-	_
Australasian Shoveler	482								-		19	7						91									52				312						_
New Zealand Scaup	433	-				_	12	_	+-	-	25			14	-		-				_	_	1		_	_	381	_					-	_	-		_
Dabchick	16						12	1						2				1																			_
Australasian Gannet	17						2		5	-				3			1				2	4															_
Little Shag	227				4		1	1		7 23	9	32		12				17			1	1				4	20								1	90	_
Black Shag	154			-	1		10		-	-	14	53			9		5	25			_	_		8		25	1						_		3		_
Pied Shag	1,240			9	71		10	6	2	3 19	103	807		19	19	8	19				11	16	28	41	8	2	30	1			8						_
Little Black Shag	60						5		-	31	10	2		2	1			5			_													1	3		_
Otago Shag	15								-																											15	_
Spotted Shag	30			-		_			-	-		16		-	-	-	-	1			-	_		-	_	_	1		-				-	_	-	12	_
White Heron	4													-	-	-	-	1			_	_		-	1				-					_	1	1	
White-faced Heron	1,293			41	30		116	1 1	4	3 61	282	381		12	11	3	107	44			_	15	25	7		49	28	3			13				15	17	15
Reef Heron	11			1													1				3	2						2		1		1					_
Bittern	3						1																			1								1			_
Royal Spoonbill	1,517				8		19		3		123	66		30	65	16	19	18				57	55	19		86	7	6			6	185	30	511	4	54	130
Banded Rail	2			1						1		1		-		-	-														-						_
Pukeko	387						14			1 73	180	74			7	1		24								2	5									6	_
Southern Black-backed Gull	4,933			72	51		206	54	3 3	4 295	249	100		265	126	146	135	912				234	60	456	27	83	142	59	29		677				44	474	_
Red-billed Gull	9,967			93	64		10 4	32 5	1 5	0 244	262	160	2	2,583	3752	31	104	68			34	187	71	5	21		194	321	-		162				11	,057	_
Black-billed Gull	2,558			6			127			4	247	405		20			4	510			7	5				118	25				8	1,063		9			
Little Tern	21				1		13				4				-	-		2						-											-		1
Fairy Tern	26				1		8	17										_																			
Caspian Tern	1,161			6	13		156	66	6	5 11	164	21		118	3	28	6	1			12	241	30		3	14	23	68	59	1	4	22	6	22	7	7	38
Black-fronted Tern	28													-	-		-	-							-		-	-				15	-	1		-	12
White-fronted Tern	4,046			232	11		208	23		1	42	251		146	72	6	70	505			4	84		81	15		47	150	134			1737			12	43	165