



BIRDS
NEW ZEALAND
Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

MANAWATŪ

Newsletter July 2025

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A pair of Variable Oystercatchers Rangitikei River mouth. Photo by Chris Tuffley

From the Regional Representative

I attended the Regional representative's meeting in Auckland on Friday the 30th May before the Birds NZ annual conference. One of the issues we talked about was how we find new regional representatives and members to take over other roles in the region like regional recorders or treasurer. One way could be to have a committee or a group that get together to prepare meetings, trips and material for the regional newsletter etc. a couple of times a year. I think it is a good idea. Please get in touch if you would like to be part of such a group (Kirsten.b.Olsen@gmail.com).

At the Birds New Zealand conference, Keith from Miranda shorebird centre suggested that we should make an effort to make 2025 the year of the Wrybill. He suggest that we all vote for the Wrybill when Forest & Birds runs the Bird of the Year competition. He suggested that we all put our favourite bird aside for just one year and vote for the Wrybill.



Photo by Neill Haggarty

The winter wader census was on Saturday the 14th June. We were 14 attending and we covered the following estuaries: Waikawa, Ohau, Manawatu and Rangitikei. It was a nice sunny day. I am in Europe until the 22nd August, so Phil Battley has volunteered to run the July and August meetings. I will write the newsletters. The news that I can put in the newsletters will depend on the contributions you make. Please send me photos and notes about your bird adventures and sightings or other bird news for the next newsletter on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com.



If you want to follow my birding in Europe, look at my trip reports on eBird:

England: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/388461> ,

Denmark: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/388512>

and Sweden: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/388514>

Deadline for the August issue is 25th July 2025.

Last meeting 11th June 2025

Nikki McArthur talked about the surveys of the rivers and coastline of Manawatu Whanganui. The photos and maps are taken from Nikki's presentation.

On the first map you can see the rivers and coastline the team surveyed. 485 km of rivers and 160 km of coastline were surveyed.

Nikki focused on five of our waders. The Banded Dotterel, the Black Fronted Dotterel, the South Island Pied Oystercatcher, (SIPO) the Variable Oystercatcher and the New Zealand Dotterel. It was interesting to see that the Black-fronted Dotterel was more widespread than the Banded Dotterel, see the two figures below.

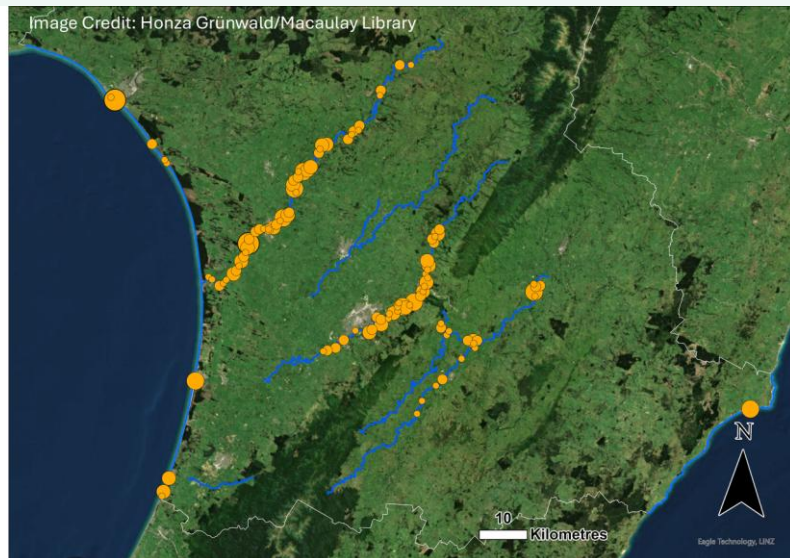


Regional breeding population:

606 birds
(3% of national population)

Rivers:
509 birds (84%)

Coastline:
97 birds (16%)

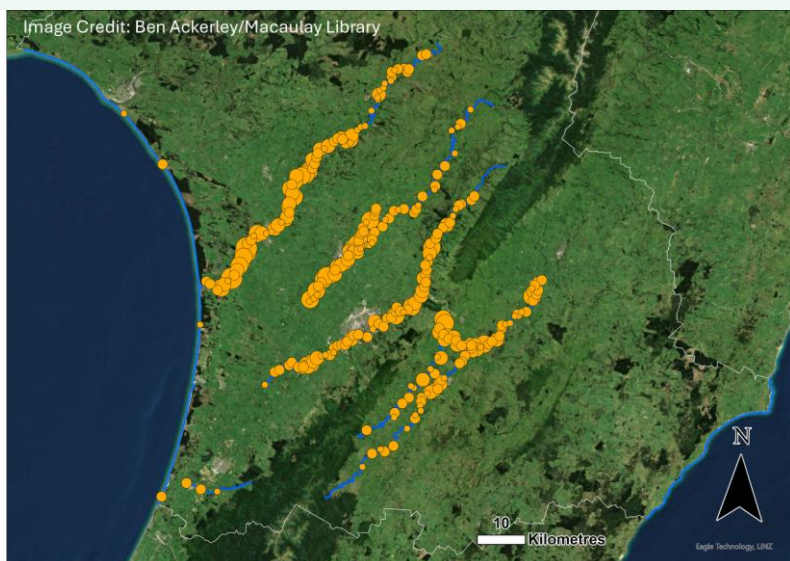


Regional breeding population:

812 birds
(27% of national population)

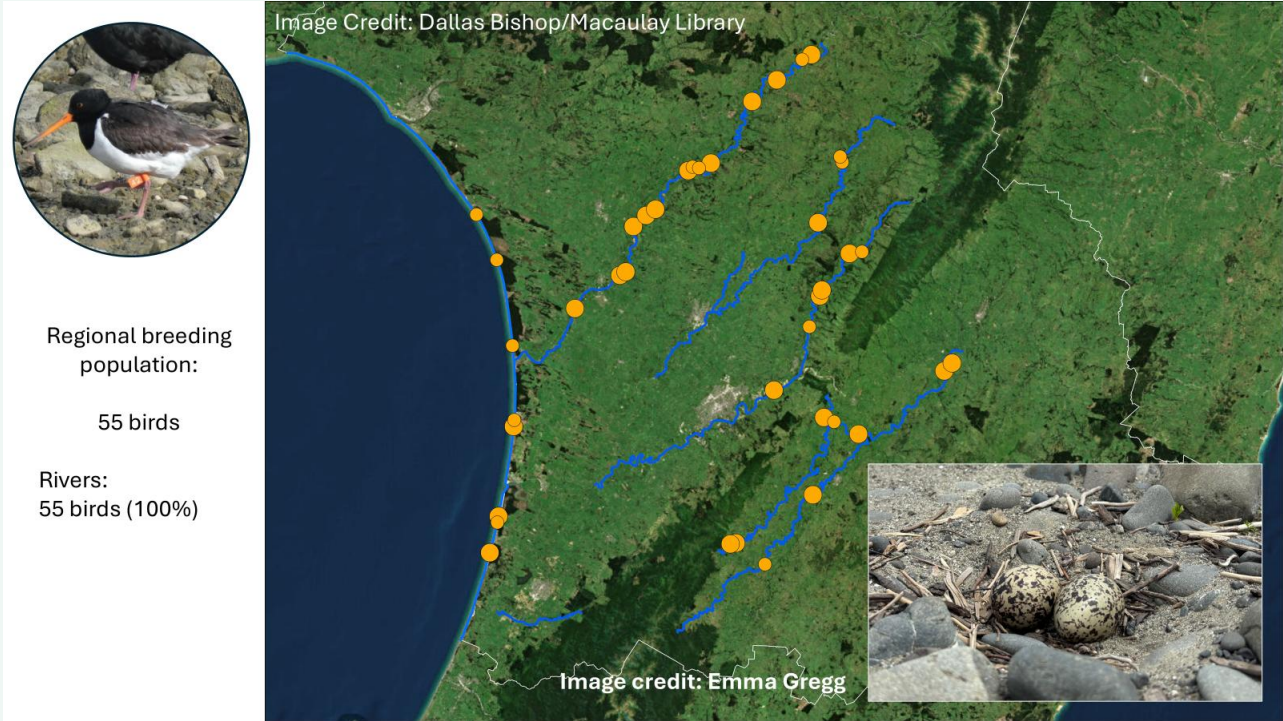
Rivers:
806 birds (99%)

Coastline:
6 birds (1%)

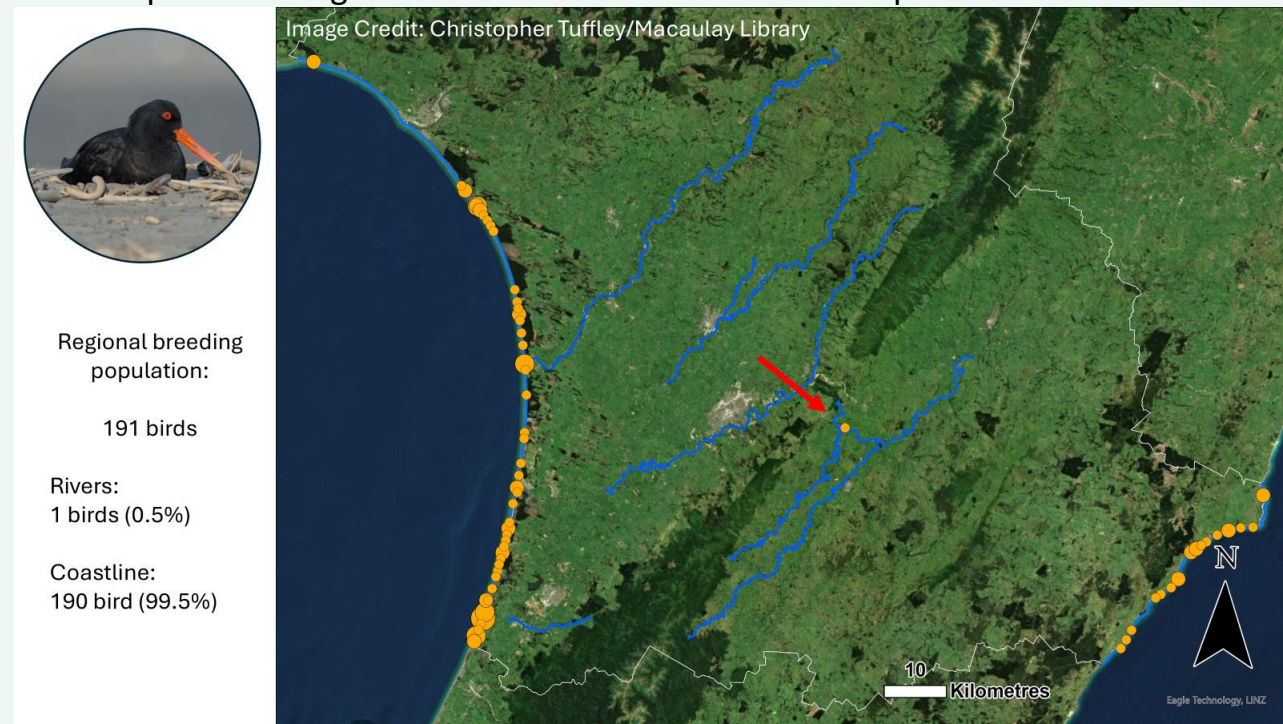


Last meeting 11th June 2025 (continued)

It was a surprise how widespread the SIPO breeding pairs were. The map below shows where the team saw SIPOs.



The Variable Oystercatcher was mainly found on the coastline. However, the team found a pair breeding far inland as can be seen on the map below.



The New Zealand Dotterel was only found in two places. Two at Ohau Estuary and eight at Waikawa Estuary.

It was a brilliant talk with a lot of questions and discussion.

Regional bird sightings

The following sightings, written by Neill Haggarty

Interesting sightings since the last newsletter include:

- 3 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos seen in the Ahimate Park area In Palmerston North
- a Whimbrel seen on the Whanganui river near the estuary
- a Kaka seen in the Bulls township.
- A large green Parrot was seen at the Palmer Roads in Foxton Beach. Social media inquiries revealed this bird to be Henry, a male Eclectus Parrot, whose owners let him 'free fly'.

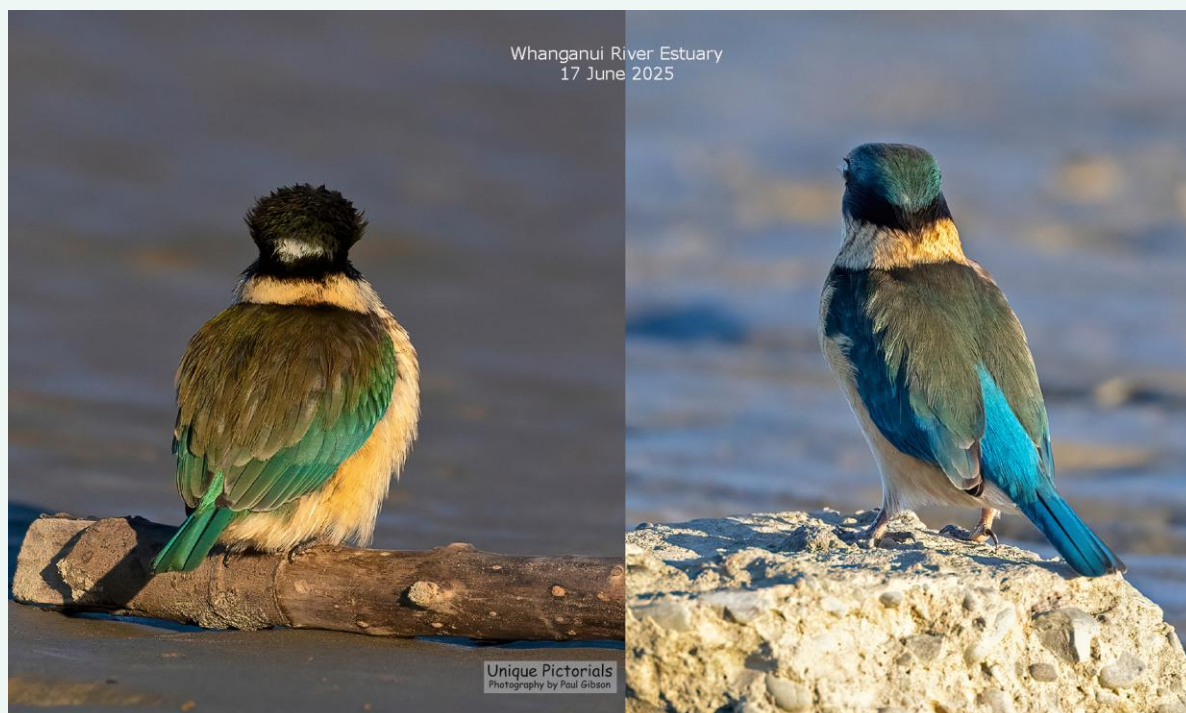
Sightings from Whanganui by Paul Gibson

Paul Gibson sends an email from time to time about his bird sightings with attached photos. I have copied most of the email from the 21st June 2025 here:

This is the time of the year for kingfishers on the estuary, and on two visits during the week, with the tide out, I had some amazing encounters. The pictures will tell much of the story, but from 1500 photographs it is hard to just pick just a few. The colour difference between birds has been quite remarkable – generally females are more greenish, and males more bluish, with young birds more like females, but with buff edges to wing coverts.



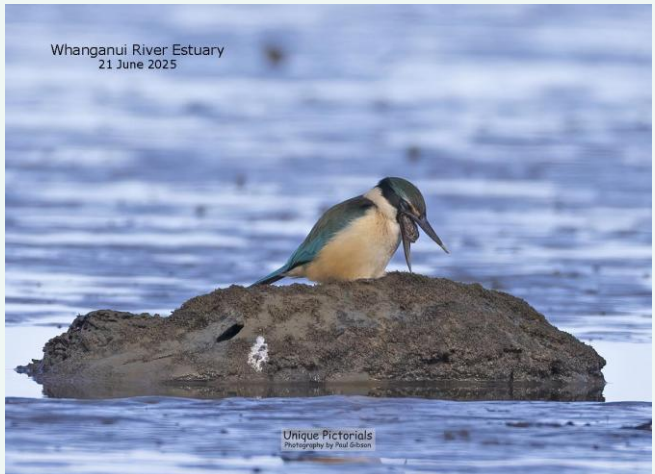
Eclectus Parrot, female left and male right



However, the colour differences I saw are far more pronounced than what any field guide speaks of. All pictures were taken in the same light. In one picture today a bird is coughing up a pellet of indigestible food.



This morning at the river I found a harrier feeding on a carcass, and after several shifts I managed to get reasonably close, the bird flying off after each of my moves, but returning after some 10 minutes. Its dark colour tells us it is a young bird.



A lone godwit was at the river this morning. It was very distant as it was low tide.

A visit to Upokongaro on a sunny afternoon was very productive where I found at least nine Nankeen night herons, a mix of adults and juvenile/immatures. Four were on tree branches below the carport, four in the London Plane tree, and one (at least) in trees behind the Gooses Roost. I saw these by going down below to the steam edge.

There are still large chicks/juvenile pied shags at the nests at Putiki. These birds have a long nesting season.

No kaka seen or heard yet. I had a drive around Bason Reserve this afternoon to check.



Upcoming meetings

Birds NZ Manawatū meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month, **7:15pm in Val Kenward Room at the Palmerston North Community Leisure Centre, 569 Ferguson Street.**

The meetings start with a short introduction that includes updates on regional bird sighting and notices. At the end of the meeting there is the opportunity for all to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

At the next meeting **9th July 2025, Associate Professor Phil Battley** will talk about:

What have we learnt about godwits and knots over the past 50 years?



A landmark event in awareness of migratory shorebirds in Aotearoa came in 1975 with the formation of what is now known as the Pūkoro-koro Miranda Naturalists' Trust. Many members will have visited the shellbanks in the Firth of Thames or stayed at the Shorebird Centre to enjoy the massed flocks of migratory shorebirds that gather there. With the trust turning 50 this year, Phil Battley looks back at what we knew about the main northern hemisphere migrants in the 1970s, and what we know now.

Phil is a shorebird researcher at Massey University whose research has focused mainly on movements of bar-tailed godwits and red knots. He has also, at various times, been the Manawatū RR for Birds NZ, and on the council of Birds NZ and the Pūkoro-koro Miranda Naturalists' Trust.

Meeting dates for the rest of 2025

13th August: Bryony Griffiths: Enderby - The Riviera of the Sub-Antarctic Isles

10th September. Liam Urquhart: Kiwi Vocalisation/ Masters theses

15th October: Oscar Thomas: Western Pacific Odyssey: Long-tailed Mynas and Short-tailed Albatrosses (note that this meeting is on the third Wednesday of October)

12th November (TBD)

Upcoming trips

Saturday 13th or Sunday 14th September

Kirsten Olsen will organize this trip. Where we go will be announced later. I am thinking about going to Upokongaro to see the Nankeen Night-herons and on the way stopping at Whangaehu Beach Rd to see if the Cattle Egrets are there. If you have places you would like to go, please contact Kirsten on kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com



Cattle Egret by Mike Bickerdike (eBird)



Australasian Harrier Photo by Paul Gibson

Links to other regions' newsletters and other material

Otago newsletter April 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/otago-newsletter/>

Canterbury newsletter May 2025:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/news/canterbury-newsletter-wrybill/>

Notices

13th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC)

BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand are excited to announce the **13th Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC)** will be held in **Perth/Boorloo**.

The AOC will be held from **Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 November 2025** at the University of Western Australia, with side events planned for the days before and after. The AOC is the primary conference for BirdLife Australia and Birds New Zealand. The largest biennial gathering of amateur and professional ornithologists and avian researchers from Australasia. Key dates will be available soon. Sign up for email updates at <https://birdlife.org.au/events/australasian-ornithological-conference-2025/>

Registration opened 5 May. For more details visit <https://aoc.org.au/>

New Zealand garden bird survey

The garden bird survey is on from 28 June to 6 July 2025. You can still participate by observing the birds in your garden for one hour and recording the highest number of each bird species you see at the same time. Then submitting your data. You can read more about the survey here:

<https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/>



Health and safety

Please, if you have any incident that could have resulted in injury or results in injury while participating in Birds New Zealand activity, report it to the Regional Representative. In Manawatū it is Kirsten Olsen, email birds.manawatu@birdsNZ.org.nz or phone 027 354 6010

Health and safety of Birds New Zealand's members when they participate in Birds NZ organised activity, like meetings, collection of data and fieldtrips, is important to the Council. The [Health and Safety Policy](#) can be found on Birds NZ webpage. Press [Here](#) to get to the policy.

To make it more practicable, the Council has developed [health and safety guidelines for field trips](#) that also can be found on the website.

The guidelines state: *"At a health and safety briefing before a field trip commences the trip leader will describe the route, any specific or potential physical difficulties that might be encountered, and the approximate times for lunch, tea breaks and the end of the trip."* (...)

"If a member has an allergy or medical condition, they should bring their own anti-histamines and personal medications. The trip leader should be advised of medical problems a member has and how to deal with them. Bring a mobile phone and share phone numbers with others. Don't hesitate to call 111 for any incidents involving injury." (...) *"The trip leader should check the weather forecast for the day and, if necessary, monitor the weather conditions during the trip. Turn back if the weather deteriorates. Each member should bring sufficient food and drinking water for their personal needs."*

Photo by Chris Tuffley



Contribution to future Birds NZ Manawatu newsletters

Please send photos and text that would be appropriate for this newsletter, to Kirsten Olsen kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com .

Deadline for August 2025 issue: 25 July 2025

Please send your contributions to: kirsten.b.olsen@gmail.com

Contacts in Birds New Zealand Manawatū Branch:

Regional representative: Kirsten Olsen

email: birds.manawatu@birdsNZ.org.nz

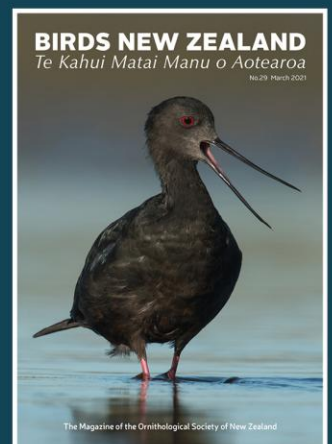
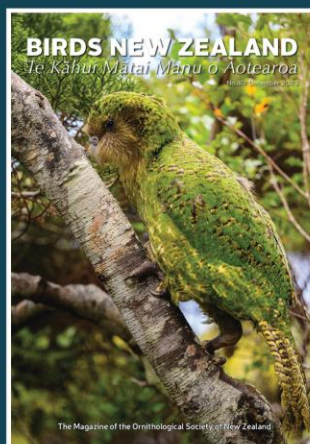
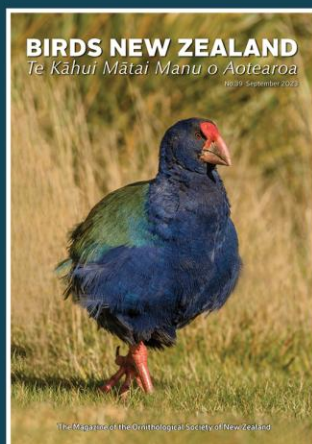
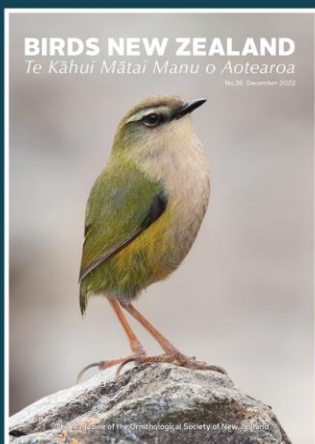
Regional recorder: Neill Haggarty

email: iolaandneill@inspire.net.nz

Please report interesting bird sightings to Neill

Wader count coordinator: Phil Battley

email: p.battley@massey.ac.nz



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It costs \$90 a year, and for students it's just \$45 a year:
<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/donate/>

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