

## Moult Recording Scheme Report 2023

I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as moult convener over the past four years. However, I feel I am no longer well placed to operate in this role. The time I have had to devote to the scheme has been steadily decreasing as I've shifted my priorities to raising my young family. My current position as a forestry researcher has also meant an increased focus on non-avian activities, making me feel a bit out of touch with the current science and players in avian ecology. All that's to say, I've very much enjoyed this position, but it's time for me to move on.

I hope the timing of my announcement provides an opportunity for the Society to solicit for a new convener, perhaps at the next AGM in Nelson? When a new candidate has been identified, I would be more than happy to assist any transition as well as arrange for the handover of the remaining hard copies of moult cards.

In regard to the report, there has been very little activity over the past year. The manuscript that was noted in my 2021 report as being written and further referenced as being submitted to *Notornis* in my 2022 report has now been published. There have been no emails requesting information about moult, nor have there been any contributions to the scheme directly outside of the handful of dead birds I encounter and record moult from each year. I have also been unable to organize any trainings related to moult due to both work and family obligations. A new moult convener would, I hope, breathe new life into the scheme and help steer New Zealand moult studies in a way that suits the needs of the Birds New Zealand community. I think the challenge for the next moult convener is to:

1. Connect with and leverage the data already being collected as part of other initiatives such as beach patrol, banding records via DOC's FALCON database, or more novel approaches like using photos to ID moult patterns from citizen science projects (i.e., eBird). Obtaining moult cards is no longer the primary means by which the scheme should rely on moult data being delivered.
2. Improve public engagement and access to information on moult. There is a desire among both the public and professionals to know more about moult and to be able to apply these methods in practical ways in the field (to age birds for instance). Currently, there are few opportunities to do this.

Again, thank you for this opportunity. I am very proud to have been able to contribute to the Society's work with New Zealand birds. Looking forward to the day when I'll be able to return my focus to all things avian, but for now I have a different path to walk.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed with handover of duties. I am happy staying in the position until a suitable replacement can be found.

Micah Scholer