



# Southern *Bird*

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## North Shore City Dotterels

The year 2000 produced some interesting New Zealand Dotterel observations from North Shore City. Shoal and Ngataranga Bays on the Waitemata Harbour are the usual places to see NZ Dotterels in the city but recently they have also been appearing in Albany.

The head office of The Warehouse Ltd is situated on the shores of Shoal Bay. The grass fields there and on the adjacent Takapuna motorway interchange are not classic NZ Dotterel habitat, but several pairs have been nesting there for the past few years.

The 2000 breeding season began with a nest hatching at The Warehouse on 2 September. This is a very early hatching date, one of the earliest on record. Unfortunately this early nest did not have a happy ending as the chicks disappeared at around four weeks old. On a happier note another pair at the same site did manage to fledge two chicks in early December. These chicks had to survive the "normal" hazards of gulls, hedgehogs, cats, dogs and people, as well as those extra "city" hazards of mowing contractors, motorway maintenance crews, underground cabling contractors and radio-controlled model aircraft.



The dictionary definition of dotterel implies a shortage of brainpower, but so far they have managed not to get too close to the rotor blades of radio-controlled model helicopters. In January a light aircraft made an emergency landing on the mudflats of Ngataranga Bay. As it was coming in to land, perhaps the dotterel pair nesting there were wishing they were over the other side of the bay where the aircraft are only small scale models.

No doubt dotterels are like us and are not happy to see an underground cabling contractor digging up their front lawn. At least from the birds' point of view the contractors did leave behind a nice piece of bare earth with lots of worms and insects to feed upon. From the dotterel watchers point of view it was easy to spot the birds silhouetted against all that orange high-visibility fencing around the cabling trenches.



These photographs show dotterel breeding areas near the Auckland northern motorway. Photos: David Pye.

About a kilometre away from The Warehouse site, another pair of dotterels nested in the grass on the Onewa Rd motorway cloverleaf. This nest was only five or so metres away from the motorway tarseal. Unfortunately an incident with a mower ended this particular nest. I suspect a truck crashing off the motorway ended an earlier nesting attempt.

Far to the north of these Shoal and Ngataranga Bay sites is North Harbour Stadium in Albany. The stadium is usually associated with the North Harbour rugby team, the All Blacks and other such events. Now it looks like we must also think of it as a dotterel location. To the east of the stadium, the coast of the Hauraki Gulf is some 4 km away. To the southwest, the upper Waitemata Harbour is 6 km away, although the tidal Lucas Creek does come considerably closer. Despite being so far inland a small flock of NZ Dotterels has been attracted to the fields and earthworks of the new commercial subdivisions next to the stadium and the Albany Mega Centre retail zone. At least one pair of dotterels hatched chicks there in late November, although they probably did not survive to fledging.

Overall North Shore City may not have the country's largest dotterel population, but it certainly has an interesting one that always keeps us dotterel watchers guessing.

DAVID PYE

## Rare Birds Committee - 6 monthly report

### Removal of White-winged Black Tern from reportable species list

The White-winged Black Tern has been observed so frequently on mainland New Zealand in recent times that the Committee has decided to remove it from the interim list of species to be reported. Therefore, there is no longer any need to send reports in respect of this species to the Committee. Observers, if they so wish, can check their sightings of White-winged Black Terns with their Regional Representative or Regional Recorder.

### Scientific names

In order to avoid the confusion about identity which can sometimes arise with the use of vernacular names only, all reports forwarded for consideration by the Committee in future should also give the scientific name of the species to which the report refers.

### 2001 reports

The following reports have been received by the Committee since preparation of the report in *Notornis* 48: 61-62 which dealt with acceptances by the Committee to the end of 2000.

The following sightings have been accepted by the Committee:

**UBR 1/01** - Report from Tony Crocker of single White-winged Black Tern seen at Ashley Estuary, Canterbury on 29 December 2000.

**UBR 2/01** - Report from Brent Stephenson of single White-winged Black Tern seen by himself, Kathleen Todd and Barbara Taylor at Westshore Lagoons, Napier on 7 & 10 January 2001.

**UBR 4/01** - Report and photographs from Chris Petyt of single Red-necked Phalarope seen by himself, Patsy Garrett and Sam Miles at Swan Lake, Farewell Spit on 26 & 29 November 2000.

**UBR 5/01** - Report from Rob Schuckard of suspected Black Falcon seen near French Pass, Marlborough on 8 April 1998. This sighting has been accepted as possibly being of a Black Falcon.

**UBR 6/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single Siberian Tattler seen at Manawatu Estuary on numerous dates between October 1997 and April 2000.

**UBR 7/01** - Report from Jim Moore of Glossy Ibis seen at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on 15 February 1998 (3 birds) and 3 October 1998 (2 birds).

**UBR 8/01** - Report from Jim Moore of Chestnut-breasted Shelducks seen at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on 28 & 29 March 1998 (1 female) and 25 April 1998 (3 females).

**UBR 9/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single Little Egret seen at Manawatu Estuary and at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on many dates between June 1999 and October 2000.



**UBR 10/01** - Report and photographs from Jim Moore of single **Japanese Snipe** seen by himself and M. Moore and photographed by Alex Scott at Manawatu Estuary on various dates between 16 September 2000 and 7 January 2001.

**UBR 10A/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Japanese Snipe** seen at Manawatu Estuary on various dates between 15 October 2000 and 11 February 2001. This is the same bird to which **UBR 10/01** relates.

**UBR 11/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single **Australasian Little Grebe** seen by himself and others at Foxton Beach sewage works on 28 & 29 October 2000.

**UBR 11A/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Australasian Little Grebe** seen at Foxton Beach sewage works on 29 October 2000. This is the same bird to which **UBR 11/01** relates.

**UBR 12/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single **White-winged Black Terns** seen at Foxton No. 1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on 9 December 2000 and 6 January 2001, and at Manawatu Estuary on 7 January 2001.

**UBR 12A/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **White-winged Black Terns** seen at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) and Manawatu Estuary on 17 December 2000 and 4 & 7 January 2001. These sightings, and those reported in **UBR 12/01**, may all relate to the same bird.

**UBR 13/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Crested Tern** seen by himself and David Medway on Pararaki, Sugar Loaf Islands, New Plymouth on 26 October 1996.

**UBR 14/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Pomarine Skua** seen by himself and Bryan Williams offshore from New Plymouth on 24 March 1998.

**UBR 15/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Crested Tern** seen on Waikaranga, Sugar Loaf Islands, New Plymouth on 25 September 1997. This may have been the same bird reported in **UBR 13/01**.

**UBR 16/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of one of the **White-winged Black Terns** seen by himself, Peter Fryer and David Medway at former Bell Block oxidation ponds, near New Plymouth between 7 November 1998 and 18 April 1999. This is one of the **White-winged Black Terns** to which **UBR 52/00** relates.

**UBR 17/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Little Egret** seen at Mokau River estuary on 6 August 1995.

**UBR 18/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Little Egret** seen at Mokau River estuary between 7 June 1998 and 5 November 1998.

**UBR 19/01** - Report from Mike Bell of single **Black-tailed Godwit** seen by himself and Dave Bell at Te Whanga Lagoon, Chatham Island on 17 December 2000.

**UBR 20/01** - Report from Mike Bell of **Oriental Dotterel** seen by himself and Susan Bettany at Te Whanga Lagoon, Chatham Island on 12 November 2000.



Above - Australasian Little Grebe in breeding plumage, photographed near New Plymouth. The lower photograph is a Wandering Tattler taken in French Polynesia. Refer to **UBRs 11/01** and **23/01**.  
Photos: David Medway



**UBR 21/01** - Report from Chris Robertson of nesting "**Yellow-nosed (Indian) Albatross**" at The Pyramid, Chatham Islands between November 1998 and December 2000.

**UBR 22/01** - Report from Ian Saville of 2 **White-winged Black Terns** seen by himself and Nigel Mann at Manawatu Estuary on 17 December 2000.

**UBR 23/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Wandering Tattler** seen at Armers Beach, Kaikoura on 27 & 28 December 2000.

**UBR 24/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 2 **Marsh Sandpipers** seen at Waimango Swamp stream mouth, Karikari Peninsula, Northland on 23 January 1998.

**UBR 25/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Little Egret** seen at Archway Island, Princes Islands, Three Kings Islands on 20 April 1999.

**UBR 26/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Little Egret** seen at Te Hapua, Parengarenga Harbour on 22 November 1997.

**UBR 27/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Fork-tailed Swift** seen by himself, Peter Anderson and Fred Brook at South West Island, Three Kings Islands on 26 November 1997.

**UBR 28/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 2 **Siberian Tattlers** seen at Parengarenga Harbour on 24 January 1998.

**UBR 29/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of **Grey Ternlets** seen at North East Island, Three Kings Islands between 14 & 20 April 1999.

**UBR 30/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of **Grey Ternlets** seen at Stella Rock, Princes Islands, Three Kings Islands on 14 February 2001.

**UBR 31/01** - Reports from Peter Schweigman of single **Oriental Cuckoo** seen by Christine & Robert Brown and Alan Wright at Portobello Road, Dunedin on 17,19,24 & 25 March 2001.

**UBR 32/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Glossy Ibis** seen at Lake Ellesmere on 21 October 2000.



**UBR 33/01** - Report from Nick Allen of up to 3 **White-winged Black Terns** seen at Cooper's Lagoon, Canterbury on 21 October 2000, 19 January 2001 and 24 February 2001.

**UBR 34/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Pomarine Skua** seen at Southshore Spit, Christchurch on 26 December 1999.

**UBR 35/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Pomarine Skua** seen by himself, Sheila Petch and Peter Howden offshore at Cooper's Lagoon, Canterbury on 12 March 2000.

**UBR 37/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Australasian Little Grebe** seen near Tinwald, Canterbury on 23 December 2000.

**UBR 38/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Cape Barren Goose** seen by himself, Sheila Petch and Jan Walker at Lake Ellesmere on 9 December 2000.

**UBR 40/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 7 **Grey Ternlets** seen by himself and Noel Henry at Sugarloaf Rock, Poor Knights Islands on 8 February 1998.

**UBR 41/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of up to 2 **Siberian Tattlers** seen by himself and Katrina Hansen at Mangawhai Harbour on a number of occasions between 15 September 1999 and 15 January 2000.

**UBR 42/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 4 **Sanderlings** seen at Taporā Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 4 April 1999.

**UBR 43/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of **Siberian Tattlers** seen by himself, Karen Searle and Katrina Hansen at Taporā Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 11 August 1998 and 4 & 6 May 1999.

**UBR 44/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Red-legged Partridge** seen near Kyle, Canterbury on 22 March 2001.

The following sighting has not been accepted by the Committee:

**UBR 3/01** - Report from Brent Stephenson of suspected **Sooty Albatross** seen off Napier on 19 November 2000.

The following reports were still under consideration by the Committee at the time of writing:

**UBR 36/01** - Report from Nick Allen of suspected **Red-necked Phalarope** seen by himself, Ron Nilsson, Shannon Lloyd and Bev Alexander at Kaitorete Spit, Lake Ellesmere on 16 December 2000

**UBR 39/01** - Report from David Roberts of suspected **frigatebird** seen at Mangere, Chatham Islands on 27 January 2001.

**UBR 45/01** - Report from Stuart Nicholson of suspected **Baird's Sandpiper** seen at Awarua Bay, Southland on 8 January 2001.

DAVID MEDWAY  
Convenor

## Nest Record Scheme

- report for the three years to 30 April 2000

Over the three years, 21 members and friends contributed 755 cards covering 44 species, bringing the grand total to 24,877 cards in the scheme. The annual totals of cards received were 261, 370 and 124 for the years ending 1999 to 2000 respectively. This represents a general decline in support for the scheme, which has been slowly dropping off since its hey-day in the early 1970s, except for a small resurgence in the early 1980s. This decline can mainly be attributed to the changing interests or commitments of individual major contributors. There are still 144 species covered by the scheme, barring recent taxonomic changes in kiwi and albatrosses.

Over the three years a total of 137 Colonial Cards were received covering: Gannet 1, Pied Shag 1, Black-backed Gull 2, Red-billed Gull 38, Black-billed Gull 1, Caspian Tern 64, and White-fronted Tern 30.

This report would have been much thinner had it not been for the excellent contributions from DoC staff in Northland. Katrina Hansen (221 cards), Leigh Honnor (109) and Jeannie Preddey (64) filed records from the Fairy Tern/ NZ Dotterel/ Variable Oystercatcher protection programme run by Richard Parrish (64), and Patrick Miller contributed 93 cards from a research project done as part of the Kiwi Recovery Programme. Other noteworthy contributions came from Don Hadden (82 cards), Bruce Mackereth (39), Bev Woolley (39) and Brent Stephenson (16).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS IN 1998 TO 2000:

Peter Anderson, Andrea Booth, Rogan Colbourne, Tony Crocker, Bev Elliott, Mike and Sharon Graham, Don Hadden,

Katrina Hansen, Leigh Honnor, Julia Kasprzyak, Bruce Mackereth, Patrick Miller, Richard Parrish, Ralph Powlesland, Jeannie Preddey, David Pye, Hugh Robertson, Colin Scadden, Brent Stephenson, and Bev Woolley.

LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED IN 1998 TO 2000:

Brown Kiwi 95, Crested Grebe 7, Common Diving Petrel 3, Australasian Gannet 1, Pied Shag 4, Reef Heron 1, Canada Goose 1, Mallard 1, Coot 2, Harrier 1, Pied Oystercatcher 1, Variable Oystercatcher 234, NZ Dotterel 151, Banded Dotterel 3, Spur-winged Plover 5, Black-backed Gull 4, Red-billed Gull 38, Black-billed Gull 1, Caspian Tern 64, White-fronted Tern 31, Fairy Tern 12, NZ Pigeon 1, Morepork 11, Kingfisher 1, Skylark 2, Welcome Swallow 2, Rock Wren 1, Dunnock 2, Blackbird 24, Song Thrush 12, Fembird 1, Grey Warbler 1, Fantail 3, NZ Robin 1, Tomtit 1, Silvereye 2, Chaffinch 7, Greenfinch 1, Goldfinch 1, Redpoll 6, Yellowhammer 2, House Sparrow 6, Starling 6, and Saddleback 1.

Due to work and family commitments, I have not been able to devote as much time to managing the scheme as I would have liked. Russell Thomas has kindly agreed to take over as the scheme convenor, and I hope that OSNZ members will deluge him with completed cards! It is important to record details of all nests found, whether they succeed or fail. - it is only the accumulation of data over many years that will provide the necessary samples for researchers to identify trends and patterns in the future.

HUGH ROBERTSON  
Past Nest Record Scheme Convenor

*New Convenor of the Nest Record Scheme, Russell Thomas, may be contacted at Rangitane Road, RDI Kerikeri 0470. Email rusnles@paradise.net.nz*

## National Twitchathon 2001

Get your teams organised for the third national Twitchathon, to be held in October.

Pick any nice spring day in October, and set yourself the target of seeing as many bird species in a day as possible and find somewhere to display the trophy - the *Porphyrio mantelli* Mantelpiece Monstrosity.

From the feedback I have had from the previous two years that this totally non-serious competition has taken place, weather-permitting an enjoyable time is had by all. Why not challenge your local Forest and Bird group, or use the event to show school kids the wide range of birds that can be seen in your area?

Once again we hope to tie the event in with BirdLife International, who sponsor bird conservation projects, especially in third world areas. Please contact your regional representative for copies of entry forms and the few rules of the competition. Otherwise forms and information on this (and the second) Twitchathon may be downloaded from the OSNZ website at [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz), or obtained from myself at 65 Allin Drive, Waikuku, North Canterbury 8254, Tel (03) 312 7183.

NICK ALLEN

