

Beach Patrol Scheme 2008 Preliminary Report

This report is based on 381 cards received as at 22nd December 2009 (403 were received for 2007 and 379 for 2006). In 2008 2,524 km were covered (compared to 2,307 km in 2007 and 2,223 km in 2006). Dead seabirds found in 2008 totalled 3,906 (3,786 in 2007 and 3,117 in 2006). This shows a few more recoveries and a few more kilometres covered. Part of the increased mileage is due to a weekly drive of 70 km along Poutu Beach north of the Kaipara Harbour mouth as part of wind turbine monitoring. Similar monitoring on the Kawhia coast has raised the mileage there as well.

Three sections had no patrols done: the East Coast of the North Island, Fiordland and Wairarapa.

Canterbury South had the highest rate of recovery at 14 birds per kilometre, obtained by the expedient of visiting a gull colony at Washdyke. Southland was second with 5.55 birds per kilometre, largely the result of a single beach patrol on Mason Bay on 2nd November 2008 when 596 birds of 17 species were recovered by Ian Southey and Gillian Vaughan. Notable in this patrol were 68 Buller's Mollymawks, 121 Mottled Petrels and 81 Broad-billed Prions. The average recovery rate for the whole country is around 1.5 birds per kilometre.

Interesting recoveries included a Kerguelen Petrel, a Wedge-tailed shearwater, a White-tailed Tropicbird, a Red-tailed Tropicbird, a Pycroft's Petrel, a Pitt Island Shag, two Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, a Campbell Island Mollymawk, a 'large bird with a hooked bill' and a 'red-billed duck'. 46 dead Lesser Knots were recovered at Karaka in March, possibly the result of a botulism outbreak or some other form of poisoning. Mason Bay yielded 100 sheared Sooty Shearwater wings in May, the by-product of muttonbirding operations on the Southern Muttonbird Islands. A Black-fronted Tern found at Kaikoura in January is possibly a first for the beach patrol scheme, as is a flamingo (albeit a plastic one). A significant die-off of Blue penguins was noted in the northern North Island.

2008 banded birds noted on the Beach Patrol cards:

Racing Pigeon SIS/2007|2297. Found on Waikorea Beach (AW) on 9/11/08. It had gone missing while in a race from Hastings to Christchurch on 1/11/08.

Fluttering Shearwater X-16050. Found on Kawhia Beach (AW) on 23/10/08. It was banded as an adult on Long Island (NC) on 29/11/2005 (2 years, 10 months and 24 days prior to being found dead).

Australasian Gannet M-75564. Found on Taharoa Beach (AW) on 25/9/08. It was banded as a juvenile on White Island (BP) on 6/2/00 (8 years, 7 months and 19 days prior to being found dead).

Blue penguin P-38051 found Petone (WS) on 30/10/08, banded on Somes Island (WS) on 30/8/07.

Australasian Gannet M-40061 found at Whiritoa (BP) 19/9/08, banded on White Island (BP) on 13/1/90.

Australasian Gannet M-60272 found on Ninety Mile Beach (NW) on 1/6/08, banded on White Island (BP) 18/2/95

The usual assortment of land birds was recorded. These were: Australian Magpie (13); Mallard (13); Black Swan (9); Feral Pigeon (7); Feral Goose (7); Royal Spoonbill (6); Blackbird (4); Paradise Shelduck (4); Pied Stilt (3); Australasian Harrier (3); Canada Goose (3); Pipit (3); New Zealand Pigeon (3); New Zealand Dotterel (2); Song Thrush (2); Pheasant (2); and individuals of Kaka, Yellowhammer, Pukeko, Greenfinch, Spur-winged Plover, Chicken, Banded Dotterel, Turnstone, Tui, New Zealand Kingfisher and Weka.

Section of Coast	No. of Cards	No. of Birds	km covered
Auckland East AE	20	115	50
Auckland West AW	75	988	584
Bay of Plenty BP	27	263	74
Canterbury North CN	17	237	148
Canterbury South CS	2	28	2
East Coast NI EC	-	-	-
Fiordland FD	-	-	-
North Coast SI NC	3	14	17
Northland East NE	25	345	229
Northland West NW	20	470	597
Outlying Islands OI (Chatham)	3	12	11
Otago OT	1	0	1
Southland SD	32	866	156
Taranaki TA	69	318	395
Wairarapa WA	-	-	-
Westland WD	1	1	3
Wellington South WS	23	106	59
Wellington West WW	63	143	198
Totals	381	3,906	2,524

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