

OSNZ National Wader Census
June – July 2011
November – December 2011 & January - February 2012

Summary compiled by Adrian Riegen

A total of 132,371 waders of 23 species were counted during the June–July 2011 census, a slightly higher number than 2010 (see Table 1). There was good national coverage with only the Far North, Gisborne/Wairoa, and Manawatu regions not counted. Numbers of each species were similar to the June 2010 except for godwits, which were down by about 3,400.

Rarities included, 1 Grey Plover, 1 Great Knot, 1 Marsh Sandpiper and 1 Terek Sandpiper.

A total of 148,662 waders of 21 species were counted in the Nov–Dec 2011 census, down from 159,111 in 2010. National coverage was very good, with only Rangaunu Harbour in the Far North, Gisborne/Wairoa and the West Coast not counted. The big difference was the godwit number with the 2011 count down to 88,949 from 2010's 101,459. Godwit numbers have fluctuated widely over the past 10 years and the 2011 count is closer to the 2009 count of 87,590. Rangaunu was not counted, which usually has 2-3,000 godwits, otherwise, all major godwit sites were covered. A slightly higher count of Red Knot this year and the South Island Pied Oystercatcher number was just 10 birds less than the 2010 count.

The only rarity this census was a single Marsh Sandpiper.

NOTE: Species names used are now from the fourth edition of the checklist

Table 1. Total Count June - July 2011

Species	2010	2011
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	79,039	81,541
Variable Oystercatcher	3,031	2,870
Oystercatcher Hybrid	2	13
Pied Stilt	19,001	21,028
Black Stilt/Hybrids	27	34
New Zealand Dotterel	651	726
Banded Dotterel	6,252	7,365
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	100
Semipalmated Plover	1	0
Large Sand Plover	1	0
Lesser Sand Plover	1	0
Wrybill	4,614	5,022
Grey Plover	4	1
Spur-winged Plover	2,003	2,690
Turnstone	281	275
Red Knot	1,287	1,537
Great Knot	1	1
Sanderling	0	3
Curlew Sandpiper	7	2
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	0
Red-necked Stint	15	2
Eastern Curlew	2	1
Whimbrel	4	6

Bar-tailed Godwit	12,562	9,151
Black-tailed Godwit	1	0
Siberian Tattler	2	0
Marsh Sandpiper	0	1
Terek Sandpiper	0	1
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Total >	128,793	132,371

Table 2. Total Count November - December 2011

Species	2010	2011
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	16477	16467
Variable Oystercatcher	1965	2296
Oystercatcher Hybrid	13	15
Pied Stilt	5240	4897
Black Stilt/Hybrids	4	4
New Zealand Dotterel	442	393
Banded Dotterel	273	519
Black-fronted Dotterel	4	17
Semipalmated Plover	1	0
Large Sand Plover	2	0
Wrybill	59	156
Pacific Golden Plover	219	116
Grey Plover	1	0
Spur-winged Plover	1535	1095
Turnstone	1589	1393
Red Knot	29724	32208
Curlew Sandpiper	6	9
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	8	11
Pectoral Sandpiper	7	6
Red-necked Stint	54	67
Eastern Curlew	9	8
Whimbrel	17	35
Bar-tailed Godwit	101459	88949
Hudsonian Godwit	2	0
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	0
Marsh Sandpiper	0	1
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Total >	159,111	148,662

There was not complete coverage in Jan-Feb 2012 but counts from; Waitemata Harbour, Nelson, Canterbury, West Coast and Southland were received. Numbers for Nelson, Canterbury and Southland are compared with the Nov-Dec 2011 counts in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3. Nelson Region combined counts

November 2011 and February 2012

Species	Nov.11	Feb.12
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	3,316	16,495
Variable Oystercatcher	581	745
Pied Stilt	79	391
Black Stilt/Hybrids	0	2
New Zealand Dotterel	0	3
Banded Dotterel	60	658
Wrybill	1	60
Pacific Golden Plover	5	0
Spur-winged Plover	43	21
Turnstone	400	160
Red Knot	11,024	9,777
Great Knot	0	306
Sanderling	0	2
Curlew Sandpiper	1	0
Red-necked Stint	3	0
Eastern Curlew	1	0
Bar-tailed Godwit	15,677	17,340

Table 4 Canterbury combined counts November 2011 and February 2012

Species	Canterbury regional sites		Avon-Heathcote Estuary		Lake Ellesmere	
	Nov.11	Feb.12	Nov.11	Feb.12	Nov.11	Feb.12
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	142	1378	792	4562	16	7
Variable Oystercatcher	22	78	62	66		
Oystercatcher Hybrid	15	21				
Pied Stilt	111	1563	65	258	1640	1986
Black Stilt/Hybrids		6			4	1
New Zealand Dotterel						
Banded Dotterel	6	851	1	34	354	548
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	3				
Wrybill		29			83	128
Pacific Golden Plover					1	
Spur-winged Plover	87	410	49	66	162	39
Turnstone	2	1			9	
Red Knot		4	4		47	
Great Knot						
Sanderling						
Curlew Sandpiper		1				
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		2				2
Pectoral Sandpiper		2			4	
Red-necked Stint					22	15
Eastern Curlew	1	1				

Whimbrel		1				
Bar-tailed Godwit	342	555	2087	1982	443	91

Table 5. Southland Region combined counts
November 2011 and February 2012

Species	Nov.11	Feb.12
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	79	644
Variable Oystercatcher	2	8
Pied Stilt	8	56
New Zealand Dotterel	5	6
Banded Dotterel	14	110
Spur-winged Plover	37	10
Turnstone	157	109
Red Knot	18	1
Sanderling	0	1
Curlew Sandpiper	1	0
Red-necked Stint	20	11
Bar-tailed Godwit	1543	1092

Tables 6 and 7 show sites with more than 3,000 waders counted during winter and summer censuses.

Table 6. Sites with >3,000 in Jun-Jul 2011

Manukau Harbour	35,843
Kaipara Harbour	27,335
Firth of Thames	18,235
Farewell Spit	9,135
Tasman Bay	6,076
Lake Ellesmere	5,513
Tauranga Harbour	3,816
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	3,549
Kawhia Harbour	3,271
Golden Bay	3,027

Table 7. Sites with >3,000 in Nov-Dec 2011

Manukau Harbour	31,304
Kaipara Harbour	24,346
Farewell Spit	19,794
Firth of Thames	14,690
Tauranga Harbour	10,319
Tasman Bay	6,797
Golden Bay	4,600
Parengarenga Harbour	4,489
Kawhia Harbour	3,300
Aotea Harbour	3,140

Ohiwa Harbour	3,099
<u>Avon-Heathcote Estuary</u>	<u>3,060</u>