



Hello all

The following is a brief summary of some of the birding activities and sightings in the region over the last couple of months.

Wairarapa BirdsNZ members have continued their work with 3 projects in this are: the NZ dotterels at Riversdale Beach, the Caspian tern colony at Onoke Spit and the Black-billed gull colony which returned to their favoured nesting site on the Ruamahanga River this breeding season.

NZ Dotterels: a dismal season with 0 chicks being produced, despite repeated nesting attempts made by both pairs.

Storm surges accounted for most losses followed by Black-backed gull predation and egg-predation by maggies.

The **Banded dotterels** fared better this year with a small number of chicks fledged.

Despite a big effort from volunteers and DoC staff to control predators and manage human disturbance of nesting areas on Onoke Spit, the **Caspian Tern** colony again failed to breed. Camera footage indicates repeated disturbance and possible predation by cats, hedgehogs and black-backed gull being the suspected cause.

A meeting to plan a fresh strategy for next season will be held soon.

The **Black-billed gulls (or Buller's gulls)** had a better time, as the nesting site they chose on the upper Ruamahanga River produced over 40 chicks.

A banding operation saw 23 chicks banded with orange alphanumeric bands (*see photo below*)



Look out for these banded chicks at Henley Lake where a number of them to be residing.

It is hoped that the chicks yet to be sighted survived the frequent and unseasonally high river flows which arrived just after banding.

One pair of unfledged chicks was found swept 5km downstream – they survived and are now with the others at Henley.

Other snippets..... A comprehensive **survey of birds living on the Wairarapa rivers** has just been completed by Wildlife Management International staff which involved over 150km of riverbed walking with a spot of kayaking thrown in. This is a repeat of the same ground surveyed 10 years ago by BirdsNZ members, so it will be interesting to see the final data. It seems there is a significant increase in the overall number of **Black-fronted dotterels**.



The **White heron** regularly at the Barrage Gates was seen often during December/ January.....

A **NZ falcon (karearea)** was reported on consecutive days sitting in trees in Victoria Street.....
.....Members monitoring the birds on Onoke Spit strongly believe a small number of **Royal Spoonbills** nested in low vegetation on the spit, west of the Black-backed gull colony.....

Happy birding! Joanna McVeagh Regional Recorder