



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

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Otago Region Newsletter 7/2010 July 2010



Photograph taken by Richard Higham Sunday 27 June at the bottom of Luss Road, Otago Harbour.

OTAGO HARBOUR SURVEY: JUNE UPDATE

Back to normal. Drizzle all round from the reports received. Here is the normal summary table

				Section				
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
S black backed gull	189	2	144	39	145	15	5	539
Black fronted tern							1	1
Black shag					1			1
Black swan						70	31	101
Blackbird		2				2		4
Canada goose				9				9
Crested grebe				1				1
E bar-tailed godwit							10	10
Grey teal							33	33
Greylag goose				8				8
Harrier						1	1	2
Kingfisher				1	1	1	11	14
Little shag	39	99	120	77	97	45	13	490
Mallard	2	42	204	56	61	178	2	545
Paradise shelduck	4		3	6	3	5	62	83
Pied oystercatcher	89			4	301	46	25	465
Pied stilt						2		2
Pukeko						12		12
Red-billed gull	445	13	198	27	133	47	2	865
Australasian shoveler						3		3
Spotted shag	3	7	5		4	2		21
Spur winged plover	2			2		11	10	25
Stewart island shag		2	13	12	8	2		37
Variable oystercatcher	8		1	10	1	3	8	31
White faced heron		1				8		9
White-fronted tern			1			6		7

Lala and team were very excited by the crested grebe record. Sue Odlin counted 11 kingfisher at Aramoana. Everything else seemed a bit lower than previous months.

Here is the July update.

Some notable aspects: it was nice weather and we got a grebe and a gannet in the count. The next count is on 22 August starting at 12:15. I'll be in touch to confirm the details. Can you please let me know if you can't make it.

OTAGO HARBOUR SURVEY: JULY UPDATE

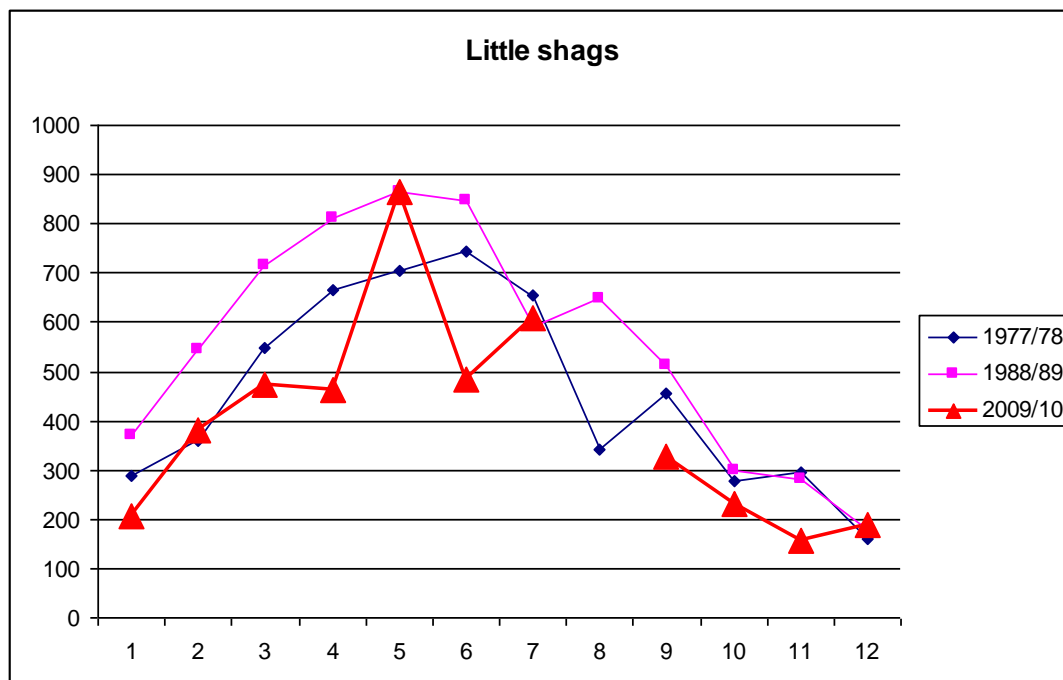
A nice day by all accounts. Here is the normal summary table
After receiving yet more feedback on some of my bird names I've checked this lot against the new checklist.

				Section				
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
S black backed gull	142	16	86	17	283	50	37	631
Black swan							51	51
Blackbird			94					94
Bullers albatross							1	1
Caspian tern							3	3
Crested grebe						1		1
Muscovy duck		8						8
Australasian gannet								1
E bar-tailed godwit						1	135	136
Grey teal						30	128	158
Greylag goose				8				8
Kingfisher			1	1			3	5
Little shag	44	120	107	67	94	169	6	607
Mallard	11	87	144	48	117	139	22	568
Paradise shelduck	2		4	4		2	17	29
Pied oystercatcher	2	2	89	7	401	8	121	630
Pied stilt						47	70	117
Red-billed gull	132	47	105	58	219	83	16	660
Australasian shoveler						51		51
Skylark							3	3
Spotted shag	1	1						2
Spur winged plover	2		12		1	1	2	18
Stewart island shag				1	9			10
Variable oystercatcher	7	20	8	7	5	20	9	76
White faced heron					2		1	3
White-fronted tern				1				1

This time it was my turn to be excited by the crested grebe out in Lower Portobello. A good flock of shoveler was present at Harwood. Also a gannet and albatross recorded by Sue Odlin and team. Overall numbers were good and Jill reports no redbilled gull on the Kaikorai playing field: they were all out at the landfill (about 400).

June - variable oystercatcher numbers seem low at the moment but red billed gulls have picked up a bit. Pied oystercatchers are down a bit as well.

July - little shags have held their numbers and are following the pattern of previous surveys well. Though clearly something happened in May. This was the month when all the red billed gulls disappeared



Bruce Mckinlay

OTAGO WINTER WADER COUNT 20 JUNE 2010

Species	Aramoana	Harbour	Papanui Inlet	Hoopers Inlet	Catlins Lake	
SI Pied Oystercatcher	25	440	74	5	244	788
Variable Oystercatcher	8	23			5	36
Banded Dotterel				46	32	78
Bt Godwit	10			73	23	106
Pied Stilt		2		29	20	51
Spur winged Plover	10	15			13	

This wader count was again part of the harbour survey and also carried out in not ideal weather. I have been informed that the Redbilled Gulls were not seen in large numbers at Papanui and Hoopers

Peter Schweigman

Hawkesbury Lagoon

Bruce Mckinlay went to Hawksbury at 10.00 am on 18 July

Location: Hawkesbury Lagoon

Observation date: 7/18/10

Notes: Full count of the lagoon and whatever else I could hear

Number of species: 21

This report was generated automatically by eBird v2

(<http://ebird.org/content/newzealand>)

Species		Count
Greylag Goose	Anser anser	12
Canada Goose	Branta canadensis	4
Black Swan	Cygnus atratus	39
Paradise Shelduck	Tadorna variegata	40
Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	131
Australian Shoveler	Anas rhynchos	48
Gray Teal	Anas gracilis	65
Little Pied Shag	Phalacrocorax melanoleucos	2
Pukeko	Porphyrio porphyrio	1
Spur-winged Plover	Vanellus miles	1
Pied Stilt	Himantopus leucocephalus	6
Red-billed Gull	Chroicocephalus scopulinus	19
South Black Backed Gull	Larus dominicanus	13
Sacred Kingfisher	Todiramphus sanctus	1
Bellbird	Anthornis melanura	4
Australasian Magpie	Gymnorhina tibicen	4
New Zealand Fantail	Rhipidura fuliginosa	1
Eurasian Blackbird	Turdus merula	3
European Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	12
Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	1
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	1

Garden Bird Survey

Eric Spurr has received almost twice as many survey forms from the Garden Bird Survey this year as last. He would appreciate volunteers to help him enter the data online. If you are able to assist please contact Eric at spurreb@slingshot.co.nz

Mary, Sue O and Maree went to the Lagoon in the afternoon of 18 July, and began counting at 1.00pm. It was very still and the reflections were stunning.

	18 July 2010	25 July 2009
Black shag		2
Little shag	3	0
Black swan	59	16
Paradise duck	35	34
Canada goose	5	12
Domestic goose	4	22
Hybrid goose	1	0
Mallard	95	299
NZ shoveler	60	205
Grey teal	83	60
Pied oystercatcher	2	1
Spur-winged plover	15	3
Pied stilt	10	13
Black-backed gull	16	12
Red-billed gull	13	10
Harrier hawk	1	

OSNZ Polo Shirts and Hats

The Waikato Branch is fundraising by selling good quality cotton shirts and hats.

Polo Shirts: \$35.00

Small (52cm) Medium (56cm)
 Large (58cm) XL (62cm) true sizing
 Colours: white, light blue, moss and navy



Hats: \$19.00

Medium – large and large – XL
 Colours: dark blue and dark green



Send your order to Mary by 1 August

Ornithological Snippets

Our neighbourhood (Sligo Tce, Lower Roslyn) has attracted many tui and hundreds of waxeyes this winter. I counted 16 tui (3 banded birds) at or close to my birdtable in mid-June. 9 still remain all un-banded.

Maree Johnstone

Sue G and Mary walked the perimeter of the Orokonui Reserve on Sunday 4 July and were rewarded with 4 tomtits jumping the fence to look at us and at the bottom in glorious sun on ripe poroporos were a flock of goldfinches, several bellbirds, two rosellas and a South Island Saddleback (but it quickly ducked down into the foliage so didn't get a chance to check its bands).

Hi Mary, Our photographer, Nikki Heath, photographed a kotuku recently near Tarras, near where she saw an Ibis a while back.

Her words, "I was once told that you will only ever see one white heron in your life so I was quite excited to see this one!

I photographed this White Heron, or Kotuku, as many people know them, in the exact same area as the Ibis was seen several months back

Maybe there is something about the cattle farmland near Tarras that attracts rare birds?? "

Rosemary Brader Senior journalist
The Wanaka Sun
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rosemarybrader@xtra.co.nz



July Indoor Meeting

This will be a special event as Craig McKenzie will be showing us some of his bird photography. Craig always has entries in the Otago Wildlife Photography Competition and last year was awarded Wildlife Photographer of the Decade. I'm hoping he will give away some of his secrets. Would be great to see a good turn-out despite the chilly nights.

We need to make a decision about whether next month is the final (as we have been going for 11 months) or to do another year. In anticipation of the port dredging the harbour in the next few years the extra information on the pattern would be good as then we could do it again after the dredging and see what's happened. Let me know what you think Bruce Mckinlay

From: **Abbie Mason**
 <doubleteapot@gmail.com>
 Date: Fri, Jul 16, 2010 at 11:52 AM
 Subject: Want to get up close and
 personal with little blue penguins?
 Volunteer wanted!

I'm an honours student at the University of Waikato, studying Animal Behaviour. I conducted a research project with the penguins on Phillip Island, Australia a few months ago, and I will be replicating the study in Oamaru in August. And I'm looking for a volunteer to help me out in Oamaru!

It is a playback experiment to find out how the penguins at Oamaru respond to male 'bray' calls from populations in Otago, Australia, and Banks Peninsula. The experiment involves playing the different calls to pairs of penguins in artificial burrows, and recording their response to the playback. Here is part of a radio interview I did for a local station in Australia if you are interested in finding out a bit more about the study

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2010/06/03/2917467.htm>

The hours are likely to be approximately 6:30-10:30pm every night since this is when the penguins are on shore in their burrows and calling frequently. I will be starting on the 5th August, and it will ideally take 8 nights, although in reality it may take a few extra nights, depending on the weather (we don't go out in the rain) and how many penguins are home each night. You would be trained in penguin

handling, since we need to sex the birds by taking beak measurements.

This would be an amazing opportunity to see what the general public doesn't get to see, since you would be right in amongst the birds, and able to observe their fascinating social behaviour up close.

I'm very keen to hear from anyone who is interested, even if you could only help out for part of the time. Feel free to ask me any questions at doubleteapot@gmail.com

Thanks heaps,

Abbie Mason

BSc(hons) Candidate
 Department of Biological Sciences
 University of Waikato
 07 838 4466 (extn. 8123)
 0273131465

I contacted Abbie and this is part of the reply I received. If I have enough nights spare at the end of my trip (I fly out again on the morning of the 18th August from Dunedin) I am planning to try and conduct the experiment on the few artificial burrows at Taiaroa Heads on the Otago Peninsula, in which case that would probably be quite handy for you since it is closer to home right? I also need to try and get some good recordings of male calls from somewhere on the Otago Peninsula, so I would do that at the same time, in which case it could be handy to have some help to speed things up. The

problem is that I won't know exactly how many nights it will take to complete the experiment in Oamaru, so I don't know how many nights I will have spare at the end. But it could possibly be the 15th-17th August all

going well. Would you possibly be interested in helping out for that portion of the experiment?

Sue O

Email Newsletters are in glorious colour!

Many of you will have received a pdf copy of this Newsletter by email as well as mail. It is quite a big job to photocopy, collate, address and post the newsletters so if you are happy to receive the newsletter **only by email**, or if you would like to but do not, please send your email address with your request to:
mary.thompson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Programme 2010

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street at 8 p.m.

Please be on time: the door will be locked after 8 p.m.

Wed 28 July	Indoor Meeting Craig McKenzie Bird photography
Sun 22 August	Harbour survey starting at 12:15
Wed 25 August	Indoor Meeting Graeme Loh Catlins Ark and Mohua
Wed 22 September	Indoor Meeting Murray Efford Studying birds
Saturday 9 October	Hawksbury Lagoon

Please send all contributions for the August newsletter to:
waitapu1@clear.net.nz

Many thanks to all who contributed.
Final date for copy for next newsletter: 18 August