



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

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Otago Region Newsletter 11/2009 November 2009

Mohua transfer

A large contingent went to the Catlins to capture Mohua for transfer to the Hurunui 29-31 October. The university and OSNZ assisted DOC in the capture of 23 birds after a full day by six teams. Twenty one birds were released in the Hurunui and will be monitored to see whether they stay put and breed with the locals.



Nice legs, shame about the tail. A typical male Mohua from the Thisbe Str, Catlins.

A nest success team, Tristan and Anya, is working out of Thisbe Stream in the Catlins. They are currently finding nests to be followed through the season to see if the winter 1080 operation was successful in stopping rats in their tracks. They have found one nest that is very accessible and if people would like to view it, contact Graeme, DoC 4770677

Graeme Loh

Harbour Survey October Results

18 Oct 2009	Section							Total	Sept 09	23 Oct 77	9 Oct 88
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
Black Shag	1							1	3		
Little Shag	4	32	55	67	32	33	7	230	326	279	299
Stewart I Shag		1	3	5	6			15	15	9	4
Spotted Shag	1	1		2				4	3	2	3
Gannet			2					2			
White-faced Heron		1	4			14		19	23	3	75
Royal Spoonbill									2		
Black Swan					5	2	21	28	73	67	105
Canada Goose				2				2			
Feral Goose					3			3	15		2
Paradise Duck			3	6	6	3	5	23	23		
Mallard	3	21	10	18	12	46		110	100	54	166
Grey Duck										2	2
Shoveler									2		2
Pukeko						1		1			
Pied Oystercatcher	2				223	12		237	178	269	150
Variable Oystercatcher	1	9	3		2	14	5	34	45	1	1
Spur-winged Plover	1						4	5	1	10	10
Bar-tailed Godwit									172	280	250
Pied Stilt							12	12	6	10	22
Black-backed Gull	53	10	15	19	287	14	1	399	255	1190	1708
Red-billed Gull	47	89	55	160	125	554	8	1038	994	862	1201
Black-billed Gull					16	30		46		91	
Caspian Tern											1
White-fronted Tern	4			35	5	26		70	86		8
Total	117	164	150	314	722	749	63	2279	2322	3129	4009

About half the birds are Red-billed Gulls. Over half the total is in Section 5 & 6. There was basically nothing home at Aramoana!
Between the two months numbers look pretty much the same. Again Red-billed Gulls dominate.

Harbour Survey The Business Side

I'm receiving your data in a number of fashions which is fine. Some of you are sending me letters which is great; others are sending copies of data sheets which is great as well. As it happens I put all the data on a spreadsheet with the following layout.

Date	Year	Month	Section	Subsection	Start Time	Finish Time	Observer	Species	Count	above tide line
27/09/2009	2009	9	1	a	10:00	10:30	KG	black backed gull	50	

If you wish to send me the data in this form as a spreadsheet that would be find. Just make sure you keep a copy!

Please make an effort to count the subsections separately.

To be able to make sure that any double counting in the middle of the harbour or along the edges of counting section is reduced I try and tell you who is counting adjacent to you. If you have missed this please remind me to say who is doing what.

With Christmas coming up it would be good if you could tell me if you will be around for the December and January counts.

Bruce McKinlay

Godwit nonCannon Netting



Our Leaders

Not a lot to report from the Godwit team. One Pied Oystercatcher in Christchurch, snow in Invercargill, 8 godwits at Catlins Lake and three days on the saltmarsh and sandspits around Dunedin. However there are still a fair number of banded godwits out there and for those frustrated by the one legged birds at high tide roosts, then maybe a walk out on the mudflats would be worthwhile. 8 banded birds were seen feeding over low-tide at Blueskin Bay in an hour or so.



Ross Creek Survey October

Contributors were Mary Thompson Len Buchanan and Alan Baker.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Black Shag				3			
Little Shag				6			
Paradise Duck				2			
Mallard	S			8B			
Black-backed Gull				9			
NZ Pigeon	B	S		1	S	2	
Rosella				S	H	S2	
Shining Cuckoo				H	H	H	
Kingfisher				1			
Rifleman		B			S	S	
Welcome Swallow				3			
Dunnock	S	S	S	2	S	S	S
Blackbird	B	S	B	11B	2	S	S
Song Thrush	S	B	S	S	S	S	
Brown Creeper		S					
Grey Warbler	S	S	S	S	2B	S	H
Fantail	B	S		2	1	S	S
Tomtit					S		
Silvereye	S	S	S	S	4	S	S
Bellbird	S	B	B	6B	2	S	S
Tui	S	B	S	4	S	S	S
Chaffinch	S	S	H	3	S	H	S
Greenfinch				S			
Goldfinch					S		
Redpoll	S	S		3		S	S
House Sparrow	S			4		S	
Starling	S		S	S			
Species Total 27	14	13	9	23	15	15	9

8 was the highest number of adult Mallard seen but Mary saw 8 ducklings on the 27th. We kept an eye on the Grey Warbler's nest – on the evening of the 20th the adults were still making frequent visits to the nest, but the next evening they were feeding the young high up in a nearby kanuka. We also found nests of Blackbird, pigeon, Rifleman and Song Thrush, and young of Tui, Blackbird, Bellbird and Fantail.

Four people turned up for the programmed visit on November 1st. We decided to do a circuit of the reserve as a group. Highlights included a Coot, an increased number of shags and a variety of old and current nests. Little Shags were seen diving with beaks full of twigs. There is a map of the sections in the June newsletter

Please may I have all November results by December 7.

Alan Baker 4675180 48 Pacific St., Dunedin 9010

Falcon Survey Akatore forest



1st November.

For a change the weather was kind to us although the rain started just as we finished for the day. Dave Bell, Sin Phua (from Invermay), Lesley Gowans, Ian Douglass and I were the team on this occasion.

We covered a large portion of forest from the centre to the east near Akatore creek mouth. Much of it was recently planted where I expected there may be a pair or two.

We started by playing the recording near where whining was heard on the previous trip and saw a pair at the head of a gully but they quickly then disappeared over the

ridge. Another response to the recording a bit further on was heard in the distance, probably over farmland and not far from the first sighting. The paucity of birdlife in the recently planted block was noted and although it looked suitable for falcon, based on what I had observed in Kaingaroa, no falcon were seen or heard except for a brief kekking in the distance. A large area of dense forest of about 10 year old trees was checked but there were very few clearings that falcon could possibly use as nest sites and no responses.

It appears that there is not a lot of suitable habitat (surveyed so far) as very large areas are all the same age with no edges of fully mature forest and little prey except near the farmland / forest interface. The next trip I hope to locate some mature forest to survey both the edges and any cleared areas within the mature forest, or farmland/ forest edges which is the type of habitat the two located pairs are using.

7 November

I went into the northeast area of Akatore on Saturday and had a male falcon turn up at the second playing of the sound recording in a clear fell block which had a smallish area of mature pine bordering it.

Later on the male was seen retrieving some cached prey and taking it into or on the edge of the mature forest and some kekking was also heard.

I am sure there is a nest in or on the edge of the forest so we will have to check that one out more closely at a later date.

15 November

My wife and I had a good trip into Akatore forest on Saturday- calm fine weather and several sightings of falcon.

We covered the eastern corner of the southern block and located a pair at one end of a large open valley with another likely pair at the other end.

The birds responded well to the call-back with kekking and flying up to the skid site we were broadcasting from enabling some close observations and great photo opportunity (if I had remembered a camera). At one point we had a female fly up to the skid site from one end of the valley and another female from the opposite end suggesting we were on the edge of 2 territories. This area of forest had more variety in vegetation- scrub, mature pines, other exotic trees and recently planted pines.

I hope to organise a trip into Akatore for the 28th or 29th November to pinpoint nests and finish off surveying a smallish section of forest.

Steve Lawrence steve.eve@xtra.co.nz

Banding Blues

A metal H band and grey and white colour bands were dropped off anonymously at the Owaka DoC office mailbox on 29 October. H sized bands are used on falcons, an oystercatchers and rock pigeons.

Peter Schweigman guessed Caspian Tern and pointed out that blue bands fade with age and look grey. A further look at the band showed that the overlap where sun hadn't got to it was blue.

The bands were put on a Caspian Tern chick at Invercargill Estuary on 10/12/1976. Could the bird really be 33 years old?

So who put the bands in the mail box and when and where and how did they get hold of them?

Graeme Loh

Saddleback Summary

Orokonui Ecosanctuary. The bad news is that of the 38 birds released last autumn only 12 have been seen on a regular basis inside the sanctuary, and for 2 of these (a pair) their territory extends outside the fence. Given that the vast majority of birds (~80%) were resighted after the release, we suspect the majority of birds have dispersed outside the fenced area over winter. Interestingly, a far greater proportion of juvenile (67%) than adult (21%) birds have settled inside the sanctuary, suggesting that adult birds may have wandered more widely.

The good news is that two pairs have successfully nested and fledged a total of three offspring, so this is the first successful nesting of SI Saddleback on the mainland in over 100 years. Interestingly, one pair had been together for two seasons on Ulva. The two pairs also nested nearly two months earlier than when saddlebacks normally nest on Ulva (this might be related to the low density of territorial saddlebacks in Orokonui). These two pairs are likely to nest again, but we are not so sure about the other two pairs, which consist of two jackbirds and a jack and an adult - jackbirds tend not to nest until their second season. Plus there are 3 single jackbirds as well. So although the number of nesting pairs is (so far) only two this year, there should be more adult pairings next year.

Keep a look out for Saddlebacks if you are in the Orokonui area (and elsewhere!). Bryce would like to know date, time, location, number of birds, colour bands of course and any notes on feeding and calling behaviour. His email is brycemasuda@gmail.com

All translocated birds have a white colour band and a metal band on one leg and two colour bands on the other. The three chicks have a yellow metal combination.

Ian Jamieson & Bryce Masuda

Ornithological Snippets

Among the **Bar-tailed Godwits** at Cabbage Point (Catlins River Estuary) on 15 November, Richard Schofield found a **Red-necked Stint**, only the 2nd record for Otago and the first since one at Aramoana on 26.10.1966, a lifetime ago!

Graeme Loh and friends have completed a fence to keep the stock off a **titi** site near Cargill's Castle and have been rewarded with titi calls on the bank.

Spoonbills are nesting on Moturata/Taieri Island again, 47 in attendance 25 Oct, and birds were seen, presumed nesting, on the outer Rainbow Islet near Papatowai 29 October. Birds were present at the nesting site at Nugget Point on 21 October. On the other hand there were 30, mostly adult s in breeding plumage, lazing around at Karitane on 15 November and there have been 16, the highest number ever in spring, at Blueskin Bay for most of October and November.

Best wishes to Mary

Mary Thompson is in hospital but seems to be improving since she reported that a Black-backed Gull is nesting on the roof of the dental school building.



Notices and Business

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

Mystery Photos

The best suggestion so far for last month's huge footprint has been a Black Swan – minus webs?

The DoC officer appeared to be strangling a Salvin's Mollymawk by the look of the greyish head and pale bill with a dark tip. However both features are present on younger White-capped Mollymawks and the picture is not clear enough to distinguish any minor differences. Measurements would separate the two species as would a look at the base of the primaries on the underwing – White-capped tend to be paler. Further inquiries will be made.



More tracks, again from Blueskin Bay and found after the last attempt at cannon-netting at the end of Warrington Spit on 18 November

Programme 2009

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.

- Saturday 21 Nov Regent Theatre 7pm
Natural History Film course films including "Albatrocity"
- Wednesday 25 Nov. Indoor Meeting Lala Frazer
The Cheat's Guide to Becoming an Instant Expert on British
Water Birds,
- 28 or 29 Nov Falcon Survey Contact Steve Lawrence
steve.eve@xtra.co.nz

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Many thanks to all who contributed,
Final date for copy for next newsletter: 16 December