

OSNZ news

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4,
for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)
Please note that sightings recorded in this Newsletter are subject
to confirmation.

No.45 December, 1987

Note Deadline for the March issue will be
21st February 1988.

New OSNZ Secretary

Increased work commitments in a new job caused Roy Slack to resign his position as Secretary. Therefore at its October meeting Council formally co-opted Dr Sue Triggs as Secretary to the Society. We extend out grateful thanks to Roy for his excellent work during his years as Secretary and wish him well in his new position.



Susan Triggs is currently employed by the Department of Conservation Science Directorate as research scientist. She studied the ecology of the possum for her MSc at Auckland University and recently completed a PhD at Victoria University of Wellington on the population genetics of the possum. Sue was appointed to the research section of the Wildlife Service in July 1986. Her present responsibilities involve the study of genetic aspects of native and endangered species ecology, including Kakapo and parakeets.

Although Sue joined OSNZ only 18 months ago she has been actively involved

in the Wellington Harbour survey and in beach patrols. She has also started a museum of frozen tissue and blood samples collected from fresh (sometimes) sea birds found wrecked during beach patrols. This collection will provide a good base for future genetic work and perhaps alleviate the necessity of sacrificing animals when new studies are contemplated.

Congratulations to Dr John Warham

The Society congratulates Dr John Warham on his recent elections as a Corresponding Member of the British Ornithologists' Union and a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the following four Council members retire in May 1988 and nominations are hereby called for, to fill the vacancies created:

Mr. D. E. Crockett (Vice President)
Mrs. J. M. Hawkins (Member of Council)
Dr. Ben D. Bell (Member of Council)
Dr. Brian J. Gill (Member of Council)

Extra-ordinary vacancies

Mr. Derek Onley (co-opted Member of Council)
for remaining two years of term.
Dr. Sue Triggs (co-opted Secretary)
for three year term, to enable key administration positions on Council to be staggered (provision by way of notice of motion will be made to allow for temporary alteration to constitution).

Nominations close with the Secretary on 28th February 1988, and must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person nominated, who must also be a financial member of the Society. Please also submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee. Retiring Officers are eligible for re-election.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1988 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before 28th February 1988 in writing and be signed by the mover and seconder.

If members have other items they would like considered at the AGM, they should notify the Secretary by 28th February 1988. Matters of general business may be raised at the meeting.

The 1988 OSNZ Annual Conference and AGM will be held in Napier on Saturday, 21st May.

S. TRIGGS
Hon. Secretary

P.O. Box 12397
Wellington

Falla Memorial Award

Nominations for the above award should be sent to the Hon. Secretary OSNZ, P.O. Box 12397, Wellington by 30 April 1988. Nominations must be signed by at least two financial members of OSNZ and should state clearly the claims of the nominee on a national scale, together with a brief ornithological vitae.

The basic requirements of the award are detailed in *OSNZ news* 19. S. TRIGGS, *Hon. Secretary*

OSNZ Annual Conference & AGM, Napier, May 1988

Another reminder that next year's Annual Conference and AGM will be based at Kennedy Park complex, Napier, from 20 to 22 May.

Puketi-Mokau Reserve

The New Zealand Native Forests Restoration Trust has a proud record of achievements. It has planted over 3000 native trees in Pureora Forest, planted 25 000 native trees in the Cowan Wildlife Reserve, campaigned successfully for the preservation of the Rangitoto Block in the central-North Island, and raised the funds to establish the McGregor Memorial Reserve at Waipoua.

Now the Trust has an opportunity to save two impressive blocks of bush in Northland, and securing them for all time.

The proposed Puketi-Mokau Reserve adjoins Puketi Forest in Northland. It was partly cut over about 60 years ago and now its 800 acres are covered largely in maturing forest - kauri, tarairi, rimu, totara, kohekohe, pukatea and kawakawa. The reserve will provide an important extension of the Omahuta-Puketi forest area. It will thus contribute to the chances of survival of the endangered Kokako and of the Kaka, threatened by forest clearing in other parts of the North Island. A Department of Conservation report describes this block as "outstanding".

In 1985 the public responded generously to our appeal to save the McGregor Reserve at Waipoua. This magnificent block of 362 acres has many fine trees and dramatic views. Now we are buying the adjacent block of 250 acres to enlarge the reserve. This block is covered partly with good regenerating bush and scrub. Previously destined for pine forestry, it will provide an ideal opportunity for restoration planting of native trees.

The QEII National Trust has recognised the importance of these 2 new reserves and it will take open space covenants to legally guarantee their future as forests. And if we can raise our share of the money needed, it will subsidise the purchase price. If we can find \$90 000 the QEII National Trust will grant the remaining \$60 000 required to buy these 2 blocks.

Will you help too? Every contribution is important, whether small or large. Further information can be obtained by writing to: NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust, Freepost 731, Box 80-007, Auckland 7.

EILEEN KERRY, *Secretary*

Grey Phalarope at Lake Ki-Wainono

On 21/6/87 we found a Grey Phalarope swimming amongst Pied Stilts at the northern end of Lake Ki-Wainono, South Canterbury. It was in non-breeding plumage and very active, feeding constantly.

Features of the bird were the "phalarope mark" through the eyes, the sturdy, broad bi-coloured bill, and grey and white plumage.

We watched it for 45 minutes and saw it fly three times after being put up by the stilts. It flew strongly in a great circle, jinking from side to side, before landing and running into the water. It called twice, a sharp high-pitched wit or dip.

Because of its mainly fresh plumage, with black middle and lesser coverts, it may have been moulting from first to second non-breeding plumage. Hardly anything is known of the moult of Grey Phalaropes in their winter quarters.

This is the 5th Grey Phalarope recorded from NZ, and the first in non-breeding plumage. The last sighting of this species in the country was a male seen in the Bay of Plenty on 19/6/77.

The phalarope was seen and photographed by John and June Fennell on 22/6/87 but has not been reported since then.

RICHARD MALONEY & GEORGE WATOLA

New OSNZ car stickers

A reminder that new OSNZ car stickers, designed by TV graphics designer Stephen Ellis, are available from your RR.

These stickers need not be confined to your car but can go onto books, boats, binocular and telescope cases, packs, hats, etc. The price is only \$1.00, all of which assists the funds of your region. They are tremendous value and last for ages, and are also a useful means of identifying vagrant OSNZers.

Projects Assistance Fund Grants

At its October meeting Council considered 3 requests for assistance from the Projects Assistance Fund and grants were allocated as follows.

Dr Ben D. Bell - \$500 as seeding finance to help acquire a Kay DSP Sona-Graph for wildlife sound analysis. The acquisition of this Sona-Graph for wildlife sound analysis. The acquisition of this equipment will have many direct and indirect benefits for conservation research and management in New Zealand, as well as allowing the establishment of an important facility for basic research on our native and introduced fauna.

John Dowding - \$1500 to cover travel costs and equipment required for a detailed study of the breeding of New Zealand Dotterels. It is hoped that the study will reveal information on the proportion of breeding birds in the population; flocking and dispersal of breeding pairs; stability of pair bond; family ties; and movement of young and non-breeding birds. Regular monitoring of nests and observations from a hide should also provide information on the breeding cycle, breeding success, territorial behaviour, and the importance of disturbance and predation.

Dr R.J. Pierce - \$1600 for travel and colour bands in connection with the study of Banded Dotterel migration. This grant includes two previous amounts approved by Council but not yet paid.

Taiko news

Exciting news has come from Mike Imber regarding the search for the breeding grounds of the Taiko on the Chatham Islands. Six birds (all previously unbanded) had been caught and fitted with radio transmitters by 27 October. One bird was tracked for 2 hours to a position probably about 70 km off Pitt Island. Other signals have been received from cliffs on the southern and SW coasts of Chatham Island, and from a bird flying inland.

The expedition obviously has its radio tracking equipment working well and now there are high hopes of locating the breeding grounds.

Computer-based bird records

I have an IBM compatible 20 MB Hard Disc computer and would like to hear from anyone using similar machines to handle bird records. I plan to put all Taranaki bird records onto discs i.e. those records gleaned from *Notornis* and Taranaki OSNZ meetings.

I would welcome all unpublished records for Taranaki that OSNZ members may have in their notebooks, particularly any prior to the publication of the bird atlas. All contributions should be forwarded to: Myk Davis, 27 Maire Street, Hawera.

MYK DAVIS

National Wader Counts - Summer 1986

A total of 158,421 waders was counted during the fourth national summer wader count, completed during November and December 1986. Once again there was a good coverage of the country (see map), made possible by the efforts of over 200 members and friends. However, a lack of members meant that unfortunately no count was made at Rangaunu, a major wader site in the Far North.

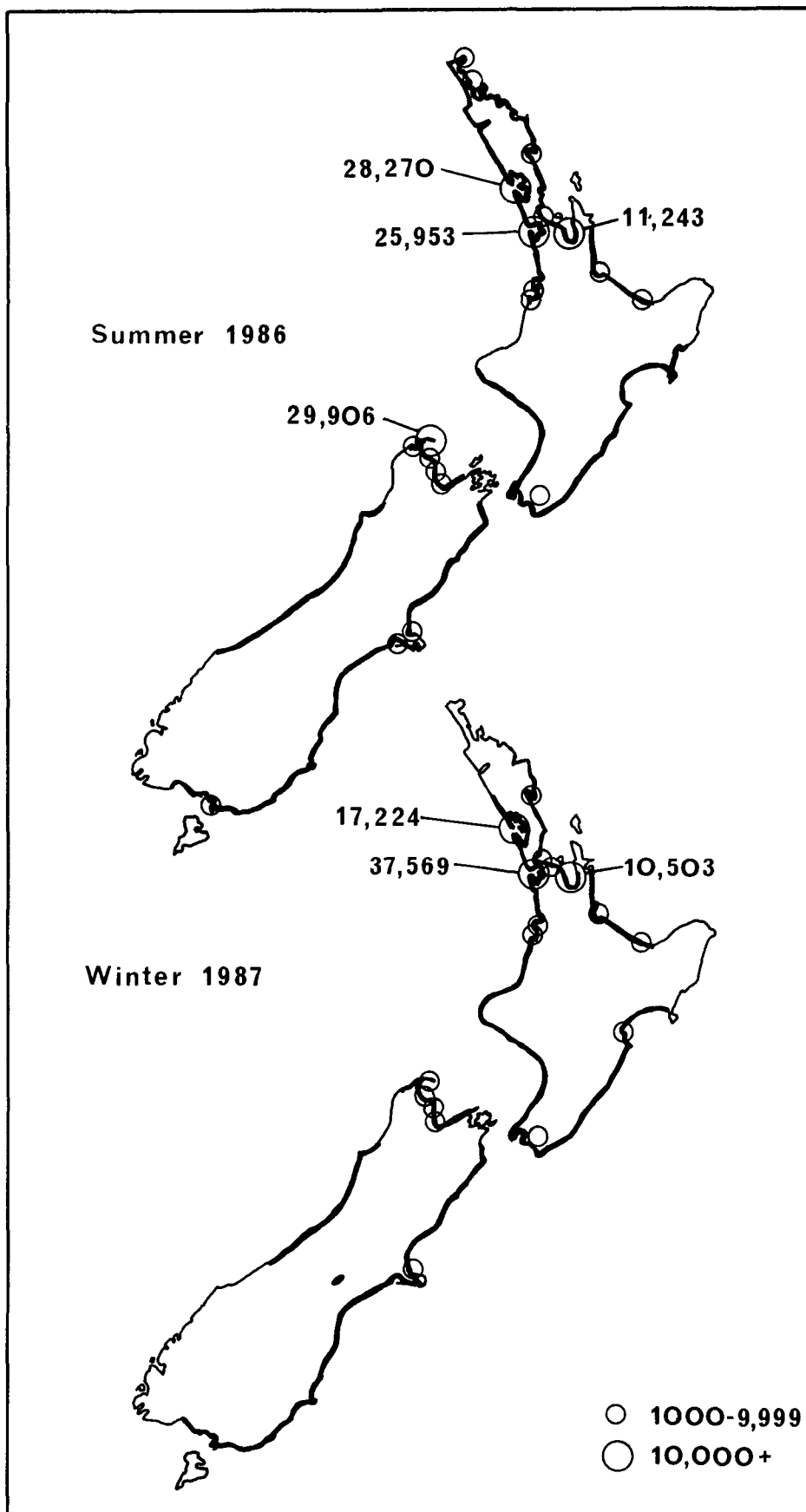
As for the previous summer counts, participants were asked to record the numbers of arctic migrants, and those of our own wader species. The following is a preliminary report of the results of the count.

Total numbers: A summary of wader totals by region is given in Table 1. Once again Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots comprised the majority of birds counted and the order of abundance of the top 5 arctic migrant species remains the same as in previous years i.e., Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knot, Turnstone, Golden Plover and Red-necked Stint.

The totals for Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots were down slightly on those from previous summer counts, but perhaps the missing birds were at Rangaunu. The number of Turnstones counted in 1986 (4,420) was about the same as in 1985 (4,426), but both these totals are well down on those recorded in 1983 and 1984 (5,514 and 5,920 respectively). It was obviously a good year for Golden Plovers because the 1986 total of 1,120 was about twice our previous highest total (548 in 1985). Red-necked Stint numbers have varied from 164 (in 1985) to 231 (1983) during the period of our counts, therefore the 1986 total of 194 was about average.

TABLE 2 — Localities where more than 1,000 waders were counted in Nov/Dec 1986

Location	Number of birds
Farewell Spit	29,906
Kaipara Harbour	28,270
Manakau Harbour	25,953
Firth of Thames	11,243
Parengarenga	8,811
Tauranga Harbour	8,481
Ohope Spit	4,113
Invercargill Estuary	3,860
Kawhia Harbour	3,217
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	3,168
Lake Ellesmere	2,679
Whangarei Harbour	2,410
Waimea Estuary	1,988
Motueka Estuary	1,931
Houhora	1,649
Lake Wairarapa	1,496
Westhaven	1,406
Waitemata Harbour	1,085
Golden Bay	1,045
Aotea Harbour	1,041



Distribution and numbers of waders in New Zealand, November/December 1986 and June/July 1987. The bold line indicates the areas covered during the counts.

TABLE 1 — Waders counted in New Zealand, November - December 1986

	Far North Northland	Auckland S.Auck.	Waikato	BOP	Gisborne Wairoa	Hawkes Bay	Taranaki	Manawatu Wanganui	Wellington Wairarapa	Marlborough	Nelson	West Coast	Canterbury	Otago	Southland	TOTAL
S.I. Pied Oystercatcher	182	7,682	736	83	2	3	1	7	16	8	3,128	225	2,021	646	389	15,129
Variable Oystercatcher	402	126	2	161	36	6	11	47	51	24	133	58	7	31	5	1,100
Golden Plover	200	298	-	28	74	40	1	42	151	-	18	4	132	1	131	1,120
Spur-winged Plover	19	35	-	3	6	43	46	6	466	-	-	-	-	-	-	624*
NZ Dotterel	102	179	2	114	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	398
Banded Dotterel	31	44	21	55	18	76	2	14	33	19	119	138	653	6	42	1,271
Large Sand Dotterel	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5
Black-fronted Dotterel	-	-	-	-	-	46	-	5	6	-	-	-	5	-	-	62
Wrybill	92	172	1	5	-	1	-	-	-	3	11	1	50	-	1	337
Far-Eastern Curlew	4	16	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	13	-	2	1	1	39
Asiatic Whimbrel	46	13	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
Whimbrel species	-	20	-	7	2	-	1	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	1	50
Bar-tailed Godwit	4,608	32,734	3,400	11,543	530	448	1	451	43	2	16,436	316	1,996	1,559	3,247	77,314
Hudsonian Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
Greenshank	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
Marsh Sandpiper	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Tattler species	2	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	2	13
Terek Sandpiper	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	9
Turnstone	1,548	894	-	243	8	14	-	-	-	216	884	-	11	-	602	4,420
Lesser Knot	6,028	24,054	6	294	119	48	2	161	21	5	16,094	12	64	-	469	47,377
Sharp-t. Sandpiper	8	58	-	9	-	3	-	-	1	1	3	-	5	-	5	93
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	-	9
Curlew Sandpiper	23	17	-	-	6	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	47	-	6	102
Red-necked Stint	26	27	-	2	10	-	1	-	2	5	13	-	81	-	27	194
Stint sp.	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sanderling	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	4
Pied Stilt	264	2,667	90	125	37	475	161	178	773	78	61	70	2,577	416	734	8,706
Black Stilt	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
TOTAL	13,590	69,055	4,258	12,674	848	1,210	227	912	1,569	365	36,934	824	7,661	2,661	5,663	158,451

* Spur-winged Plovers are numerous and widespread in the South Island and this species is not included in the South Island totals.

TABLE 3 — Waders counted in New Zealand, June-July 1987

	Far North + Northland	Auckland S. Auck.	Waikato	BOP	Gisborne Wairoa	Hawkes Bay	Taranaki	Manawatu Wanganui	Wairarapa	Nelson	Marlborough	West Coast	Canterbury	Otago	Southland	TOTAL	
S.I. Pied Oystercatcher	-	1,883	47,817	2,684	914	1	10	1	41	14	17,342	14	869	3,320	1,876	919	77,705
Variable Oystercatcher	-	227	308	29	230	13	7	11	61	11	226	8	29	19	67	17	1,263
Golden Plover	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	6
Spur-winged Plover	-	-	58	-	167	176	192	200	83	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	912*
NZ Dotterel	-	58	290	9	154	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	19	533	
Banded Dotterel	1,218	700	2,409	563	1,346	50	116	33	88	392	1,733	14	38	1,041	347	183	10,271
Mongolian Dotterel	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Black-fronted Dotterel	-	-	2	-	-	129	5	8	87	-	-	1	29	-	-	-	260
Wrybill	-	365	2,230	-	90	46	-	21	-	47	-	-	2	-	5	2,867	
Far-Eastern Curlew	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	
Asiatic Whimbrel	-	-	2	-	4	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	
Whimbrel species	-	-	2	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	8	
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	190	2,823	480	857	24	60	-	24	1,589	6	10	187	159	46	6,455	
Hudsonian Godwit	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Greenshank	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Marsh Sandpiper	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Siberian Tattler	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	
Terek Sandpiper	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	
Turnstone	-	-	175	1	34	-	-	-	-	116	20	-	-	-	4	350	
Lesser Knot	-	41	3,025	1	-	-	-	-	-	258	-	-	3	-	56	3,384	
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
Red-necked Stint	-	-	15	-	4	2	-	1	-	4	-	-	5	-	1	32	
Pied Stilt	-	409	11,905	420	1,530	249	1,577	206	279	1,454	457	94	102	1,005	326	98	20,111
Black Stilt	-	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	-	-	66	
Hybrid Stilt	-	-	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	11	
TOTAL	1,218	3,873	71,070	4,201	5,331	517	2,141	456	606	1,994	21,781	158	1,050	5,674	2,775	1,350	124,195

+ Banded Dotterels were counted in the Far North in April (R.J. Pierce, pers. comm.)

* Spur-winged Plovers are numerous and widespread in the South Island and this species is not included in the South Island totals.

Most NZ-breeding species would still be on their breeding grounds during the period of this count, and so only a proportion of the total population would have been included in this survey.

Distribution: Localities where more than 1,000 waders were counted are listed in Table 2, and the general distribution of waders is shown on the accompanying map. As for all previous counts the general pattern in summer is that most migratory waders are concentrated in the north (Parengarenga to Kawhia), Bay of Plenty, Nelson and Southland.

More than 10,000 waders have been recorded consistently at Farewell Spit, Manukau Harbour, Kaipara Harbour and the Firth of Thames. However, there are some marked annual changes in the totals for some of these areas e.g., Kaipara Harbour 28,270 (1986), 17,726 (1985), 8,953 (1984) and 9,401 (1983). There is less annual variation in the NZ totals, which now range from 142,467 to 166,088 over the 4 years of records.

Species distribution: As in previous summers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots favoured the harbours of the Far North/Northland & Auckland/South Auckland, and the Bay of Plenty and Nelson regions. Turnstones were concentrated at Parengarenga - 1,500, Kaipara - 618, Manukau - 130, Firth of Thames - 139, Bowentown Shellbanks - 200, Farewell Spit - 750, L. Grassmere - 137, and Invercargill Estuary - 480. Golden Plovers favoured Parengarenga - 200, Kaipara - 90, Manukau - 58, Firth of Thames - 150, Wairoa/Ngamotu - 65, Westshore - 40, Manawatu Estuary - 42, Lake Wairarapa - 151, Lake Ellesmere - 128, Invercargill Estuary - 74, and Awarua Bay - 57.

There were some interesting totals of the rarer species, including 46 Asiatic Whimbrels, 2 Marsh Sandpipers and 3 Greenshanks at Parengarenga; 5 Terek Sandpipers at Kaipara; 4 Large Sand Dotterels at Manukau; 32 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at the Firth of Thames; 13 Far Eastern Curlews at Farewell Spit; 47 Curlew Sandpipers and 79 Red-necked Stints at Lake Ellesmere; and a Hudsonian Godwit at Catlins.

. . . and Winter 1987

The fourth national winter wader count, completed during June/July 1987, resulted in some 124,195 birds being counted.

As in previous years, members were asked to record the numbers of NZ-breeding species and those of any overwintering migrants. Fortunately, during June/July the weather was generally much better than that which we encountered during the 1986 count.

However, the contingent of members which covered Farewell Spit endured some atrocious conditions.

Unfortunately it appears that no counts were made in the Far North this winter, and this leaves a serious gap in our coverage. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who did complete counts in this region during June/July because it's not too late to incorporate more information in the final report - to be published in *Notornis*.

The following is a preliminary report on the results of the count.

Total numbers: A summary of wader totals by region is given in Table 3. Once again NZ-breeding species comprise the majority of the birds counted and the order of abundance was similar to that recorded during previous winter counts. Pied Oystercatchers and Pied Stilts accounted for nearly 90% of the total number of birds counted, followed by Banded Dotterels, overwintering Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots, Wrybills and Variable Oystercatchers.

During the 4 winter counts the total number of Pied Oystercatchers has varied little - from 77,705 (1987) to 80,307 (1986). Similarly, Pied Stilt numbers have varied only between 17,308 (1984) and 20,111 (1987). The 10,271 Banded Dotterels counted this year is by far the highest total recorded, but perhaps this reflects members' greater awareness of this species resulting from the current extensive colour-banding programme. Wrybill numbers continue to decline. However, this winter the number counted at the Firth of Thames, one of the major wintering grounds for Wrybills, may have been affected by a particularly low high tide which enabled birds to feed over an extensive area during the period of the count.

Of the remaining NZ-breeding species totals for Variable Oystercatchers and NZ Dotterels were similar to those recorded in previous years. Spur-winged Plovers continue to increase in number in the North Island, with sizeable flocks reported from all regions from the Bay of Plenty south.

The numbers of all overwintering migrants were down on 1986 figures. The 6,455 Bar-tailed Godwits is the lowest total recorded and the 350 Turnstones is also a low number for this species. The 3,384 Lesser Knots overwintering appears to be about average. These totals represent 8% (Bar-tailed Godwits), 7.9% (Turnstones) and 7.1% (Lesser Knots) of the numbers of these species recorded during summer 1986.

Distribution: Localities where more than 1,000 waders were counted are listed in Table 4, and the general distribution of waders is shown on the accompanying

map. These show the same general pattern of distribution that occurred in previous winters i.e. that in winter the important areas for waders are in the north, the Nelson region, and at Lake Wairarapa, Avon-Heathcote Estuary, and Westshore.

TABLE 4 — Localities where more than 1,000 waders were counted in June/July 1987

Location	Number of Birds
Manukau	37,569
Kaipara Harbour	17,224
Firth of Thames	10,503
Farewell Spit	8,755
Golden Bay	6,014
Waimea Estuary	3,549
Whangarei Harbour	3,403
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	3,227
Tauranga Harbour	2,949
Kawhia Harbour	2,738
Waitemata Harbour	2,134
Lake Wairarapa	1,972
Motueka paddocks	1,925
Westshore	1,358
Ohope/Ohiwa	1,290
Whitford Inlet	1,135
Aotea Harbour	1,049

Manukau Harbour has consistently topped the table, proving it to be the most important site for waders in winter. There has been relatively little variation in the national totals, which now range from 122,078 (1985) to 132,527 (1986).

The extent of coverage in most regions continues to be very good. In the North Island, all the Taranaki region was covered for the first time, while in the South Island the areas covered were consistent with previous years. The substantial efforts from regions where there are few members but large distances to travel are certainly appreciated.

Species Distribution: Once again the harbours of the north, and the Nelson region were the most important wintering grounds for Pied Oystercatchers. Over 50% of the Pied Stilts counted were concentrated in the Auckland/South Auckland regions. The highest count of stilts was made at Manukau Harbour - 4,826, followed by Kaipara - 3,336, and the Firth of Thames - 2,909. Other important areas were Tauranga Harbour - 862, Westshore - 1,177, Lake Wairarapa - 1,443, and Lake Ellesmere - 409. Farewell Spit (1,275), Kaipara Harbour (1,026) and Parengarenga (930+) were the most important wintering areas for Banded Dotterels. Other important areas were Manukau Harbour (778), Tauranga Harbour (720), Whangarei Harbour (689), Ohope/Ohiwa (484), Lake Ellesmere (440), and Kawhia Harbour (437). Wrybills were concentrated at Manukau Harbour (1,366), Firth of Thames (650) and Whangarei Harbour (365).

There will be another national winter wader count in June/July 1988. Now is the time to contact your RR to register your availability for these counts.

PAUL SAGAR, *Coordinator National Wader Counts*

Membership Survey - Preliminary Report No. 2

Based on returns received by 29 October 1987. The flood is now over and only a few questionnaires are still being received - AND ARE STILL WELCOME.

The revised table of percentage returns has not quite made the 50% mark. Apologies must be made to Wairarapa region who were missed off the original table, but have made it this time.

Percentage returns of surveys, by region

Auckland	36
Bay of Plenty	81
Canterbury	46
Far North	39
Gisborne/Wairoa	75
Hawkes Bay	39
Marlborough	38
Manawatu/Wanganui	33
Nelson	68
Northland	45
Otago	51
South Auckland	39
Southland	67
Taranaki	36
Volcanic Plateau	43
Waikato	48
Wairarapa	50
West Coast	50
Wellington	53
Total returns from all members	46%

Bay of Plenty have maintained their pre-eminence at the top of the tree with a remarkable 81%. However, it is a pity to see those major urban regions in the north trailing somewhat. Maybe they do not open their mail up there - as at least one member was unaware of the survey some 2 months after receiving the questionnaire! Is another possible reason, that the pace of life is so hectic that even an hour is hard to find to assist the Society?

The percentage returns by sex and age have not changed markedly with the extra returns from those published in our first report.

We promised to look at how many new members the Society can expect in the next 2 years, if recruitment was as promised. For those who responded to the survey, 60% said yes to the question - "Would you be prepared to enlist at least one new member in the next two years?". A further 8% of members who replied said that they would try to recruit another member.

As shown in *Report 1*, "Talking to a member" was the main method of first becoming interested in the Society. One or

two of the answers to this question are worth recording:-

"Forcibly enrolled by 2 friends" (has been a member for some years as a result)
 "Told to join", from a prominent scientist.
 "The noticeboard at Farewell Spit" featured a few times.

Probably the most interesting response to this question came from a person aged 60+ - "bedtime stories by father", which illustrates the power of getting people interested early in life.

One of the keys to the future of the Society is *membership*. It is clear that if members are enthusiastic about their Society, talk about their activities and actively encourage new members, then there should be an increase of 200 New Zealand members in the next 2 years. *This would immediately lessen any future needs for an increase in subscriptions.*

A corollary of this is the recent questionnaire sent out asking for planning information on the 1990 IOC. Already 100 persons from overseas have requested information about joining the Society and receiving *Notornis*. These enquiries are being followed up and some new members already enrolled.

As expected, people prefer to watch birds in different manners. As they were able to score more than one response, the preferences are listed in order of total response.

On own	223
Small group	119
With family	90
No preference	80
Large group	5
No comment	3

This obviously should be related to the question on how people obtained the "most satisfaction from being part of OSNZ". Again, more than one response was possible.

Learning more about birds	301
Reading OSNZ publications	271
Taking part in projects	187
Subscribing to worthwhile research activity	187
Learning of good birding spots	174
Birding in the company of others	156
Social aspects of meetings and activities	123
Other	34
No comment	8

Under 'others' are some revealing and, we think, generally applicable comments regarding satisfaction. Sharing knowledge of birds - helping newcomers and visitors - opportunity to see NZ's unspoilt places - learning what long-time members actually do - stimulation when enthusiasm wanes - opportunity to hear and meet field scientists - contribution of amateur observations to scientific research - gives a purpose to outings - obtaining assistance from keen OSNZers to help with private research - fostering an interest in bird conservation.

Finally for this report we looked at how members would describe themselves as a member of OSNZ. Again more than one item could be listed and very few persons marked only one! It would be interesting, no doubt, in the light of some of the comments made, to ask some people how *they* would define the terms which were used by us. Obviously a twitcher is generally unknown to a New Zealand audience. Maybe we should ask for a best description as a competition in a future newsletter.

Conservationist	234
Birdwatcher	185
Serious bird observer	139
Ornithologist	118
Support OSNZ but know little about birds	38
Student	29
Listener/ticker/twitcher	22
Aviculturalist	12
No comment	4

It is pleasing to see that members not only study birds but are, as one member put it, keen on "fostering an interest in bird conservation". Obviously as analysers, we have the advantage of matching comments with names and sometimes the results are surprising.

We felt, however, that a very senior founding member of the Society should be congratulated for the very apt description of himself as a member of OSNZ - "birdwatcher, ticker, conservationist, student". A small prize will be sent to the first member who furnishes the correct name of the said member.

Happy birding over the summer vacation period! *The challenge now is for 160 new NZ members by the AGM in May 1988, to give us 1000 New Zealand members.*

BRIAN D. BELL & CHRISTOPHER J.R. ROBERTSON

Grey-faced Petrels in Taranaki

During the winter of 1986, Bryan Williams and I visited petrel burrows which Bryan had found on the top of coastal cliffs at Waireka, just west of New Plymouth. We collected some feathers from near the burrows and later identified them as coming from Grey-faced Petrels. This winter about 20 Grey-faced Petrels were seen flying above the Waireka colony at dusk and Erica Woodger found a Grey-faced Petrel on the track between Waireka and New Plymouth.

This newly discovered colony at Waireka is only a few hundred metres south of the previous southern limit of breeding for Grey-faced Petrels, (at Urenui), but it lies some 31 km to the west. We may be witnessing a restoration of the pre-human distribution of Grey-faced Petrels.

JOHN CLARK

All at sea

On 28/8/87, while birdwatching at the Waipara Rivermouth in North Canterbury I saw a flock of 8 Grey Teal take off from the lagoon, cross the beach and fly out to sea. They formed a tight group and dropped to a level about a metre above the waves. When they were about 1 km from the shore their path crossed that of 2 southbound Fluttering/Hutton's Shearwaters.

Both parties changed direction and the result was that the teal formed a chevron on the leading shearwater. The 2 species flew together for several minutes before parting company and returning to their original courses. The Grey Teal flew quickly eastwards and I eventually lost sight of them among the waves. The next landfall in that direction is the Chatham Islands, over 850 km away. No doubt it is occurrences like this that have led to the colonisation of many offshore islands.

Other birds present at the Waipara Rivermouth in late August included 122 Spur-winged Plovers, 67 Banded Dotterels, 18 Pied Oystercatchers, 22 Pied Stilts, 4 Lesser Knots, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, 72 Canada Geese and 41 Black Swans.

ANDREW CROSSLAND

Kawhia winter census data 1976-87

Recently I compiled the results of the last 12 years winter census made at Kawhia Harbour by Waikato OSNZ members. These are presented in the table below.

The census was taken in late June or early July each year by counting birds at the main roosts on the island or its surrounding shellbanks, and when possible the mudflats adjacent to the main channel "up-harbour". The counts for waders are

probably accurate as these birds congregate at favoured roosts, but other species such as swans, ducks and shags are widely dispersed throughout most of the harbour and our census methods do not count them all. The counts of the latter species are given only as a general guide to their abundance.

Kawhia is an important wintering ground for S.I. Pied Oystercatchers, Black Swans and Banded Dotterels. The numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits which stay through the winter is perhaps increasing. However, the 'star' bird is undoubtedly the Black Stilt, and this been found each winter since 1976 along with hybrids, one of which was seen to be colour-banded in 1987. More Banded Dotterels have been found recently compared with the early years of the census. It is likely that Banded Dotterels (and other waders) regularly commute between Kawhia and Aotea Harbours as large flocks have been seen on several occasions to fly along the ocean beach towards Aotea. During the 1987 census 437 Banded Dotterels were counted at Kawhia and 126 at Aotea, yet a month previous there were 515 at Kawhia.

White-fronted Terns are rare on the harbour during winter (in summer it is usual to see more than 100). During winter the terns are often seen on west coast beaches or fishing close inshore. In contrast, Gannets often forsake the open sea for the calm, shallow water of the harbour, where they are often seen plunging-diving for food.

Little Black Shags seem to have more or less abandoned the harbour since 1982.

Other species seen occasionally were Turnstone, Eastern Long-billed Curlew, Hudsonian Godwit, Grey Duck and Shoveler.

ADRIAN PLANT

Brown Booby at Coopers Lagoon

On 5/7/87 Julie Watola found a dried Brown Booby on the shingle bank at Coopers Lagoon, Canterbury. It was an immature bird and its identification was confirmed by its size, blackish-brown plumage, and 14 tail feathers. Judging by its condition it was possibly blown ashore in early May. The bill measured 97 mm, tarsus 45 mm, tail 192 mm. The wings were in too poor a condition to be measured reliably.

The only other Brown Booby recorded from the South Island was one seen by Ray Pierce, 10 miles south of Timaru, on 29/3/69 (*Notornis* 16: 125).

GEORGE WATOLA

Regional Roundup

Far North/Northland: Beach patrols along 90 Mile Beach during the first half of the year produced 238 birds of about 35 species. The most common species found were Fluttering Shearwaters and Black-backed Gulls, followed in order of abundance by Gannets, Little Blue Penguins, Sooty Shearwaters and Buller's Shearwaters. Among the rarer species were 2 White-headed Petrels, 1 Mottled Petrel, 2 Westland Black Petrels and 1 Red-tailed Tropicbird.

Beach patrols of Dargaville west coast beaches during the same period produced 258 birds of about 38 species. Here Sooty Shearwaters and Black-backed Gulls were the commonest finds, to be followed by Gannets, Little Blue Penguins and Fluttering Shearwaters. Less common species included 5 Buller's Mollymawks, 2 Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, 5 White-headed Petrels, 5 Mottled Petrels, 1 Blue Petrel, 4 Antarctic Prions, 1 Westland Black Petrel, and 1 White-faced Storm Petrel. (David & Ruth Crockett)

Auckland: The September issue of *Tara* (No. 47) includes an account of visits to Stanley Island by Tim Lovegrove and John Dowding in which the aims are to study nesting sea-birds and to transfer Saddlebacks from there to Kapiti. The region's winter wader counts and beach patrol results are tabulated, and another article describes the Hudsonian Godwit seen at Mangere by Geoff Arnold, Richard Lowe and others. Subsequently a Lesser Yellowlegs has held their attention and we hope it will stay to be part of the summer tally.

For the third successive year our tree-planting trip to Tiritiri Island enjoyed perfect weather in mid-August, but rain threatens for the survey and bird-counting visit of 13-15/11. A camping trip to Motuora near Kawau Island, organised by Simon Chamberlin and John Dowding, confirmed that Penguins and Grey-faced Petrels are nesting and showed that this is another predator-free island of the Hauraki Gulf to which introductions may be

Summary of Kawhia Harbour winter census results 1976-87

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Gannet	11	2	6	6	5	4	5	5	-	7	3	6
Little Shag	23	51	28	12	15	42	13	16	15	2	10	14
Black Shag	6	8	12	17	25	15	60	29	31	11	5	21
Little Black Shag	10	4	2	10	2	5	13	-	-	-	1	-
Pied Shag	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	4	-	1	6
White-faced Heron	50	68	6	34	69	52	80	19	103	20	131	74
Reef Heron	2	1	2	4	2	1	3	1	4	2	2	1
Black Swan	286	16	600	400	24	138	355	794	760	1250	1660	250
Mallard	315	297	200	353	278	97	520	151	233	?	80	172
SIPO	1454	1248	1213	1598	1751	3100	2598	2664	2602	2065	2133	1665
Variable Oystercatcher	1	1	5	1	2	18	3	2	6	2	1	5
NZ Dotterel	10	-	-	-	11	17	25	22	12	10	5	9
Banded Dotterel	104	?	70	1	390	43	402	453	387	342	422	437
Wrybill	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	-	1	-
Asiatic Whimbrel	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	3	2	-
Lesser Knot	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	215	150	100	100	145	118	207	173	152	243	362	380
Pied Stilt	480	285	102	470	281	282	487	193	268	100	278	226
Black Stilt	2	10	1	6	8	12	9	11	8	11	4	4
Hybrid Stilt	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	9	9
Black-backed Gull	?	54	30	38	75	55	71	81	64	35	128	105
Black-billed Gull	-	-	-	2	2	4	2	5	15	2	6	2
Red-billed Gull	54	23	39	49	71	70	94	72	44	78	53	36
Caspian Tern	30	35	17	19	29	26	21	20	14	20	-	17
White-fronted Tern	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

possible. A current species list of 39 resident or visiting birds was compiled. Other field work has been well supported and we have co-operated with regional park rangers in surveys of the Waitakere and Hunua Ranges for bush birds, including Tomtits and Kokako, and in field days to explain the bird-life of Ambury and Muriwai Regional Parks.

The visit of Gerry Clark to recount the Totorore Expedition produced a record crowd of 150, and talks by Peter Jenkins on Starling vocal behaviour, and by David Crockett on Lord Howe Island, were also very popular. (Micheal Taylor)

Waikato: Members of the species *Homo sapiens ornithologicalis* are showing a strong migratory urge this spring, with dispersal extending into tropical and adjacent regions. A northward trend has been apparent, with small groups visiting Miranda (where one of the first(?) returning Red-necked Stints was seen looking very bedraggled on 1/9), and some nocturnal groups being seen in central Auckland (where they flocked to hear Gerry Clary speak about his *Totorore* voyage).

The regional recorder (an undescribed subspecies) has extended his range to Gau, where he is assisting with the search for the Fiji Petrel.

One or two stragglers have been reported dispersing in a north-easterly direction, with Betty Seddon and Folkert Nieuwland assisting with Saddleback work on Stanley Island.

The main movement, however, is south east with several members, including the RR, converging on the Chatham Islands where they flock biennially with ornithologists from other New Zealand regions to seek the breeding site of the Taiko.

Members with a more restricted range report the unusual sighting of a Scaup at Hamilton Lake on 13/9 (M. Daly). I. Reid heard 4 or 5 Kokako calling at Hauturu Road North in August, while others joined a small flock of juveniles at the Hamilton Junior Naturalists' Lodge at Oparau. The latter group completed a census of birds in the Te Kauri Reserve. Adults were distinguishable from juveniles by their larger size, greyer upperparts, and characteristically slower movements on slippery tracks.

Members continue to be gregarious at evening meetings, where in September they enjoyed a talk on waders by Stephen Davies. (Stella Rowe)

Taranaki: Spur-winged Plovers continue to increase in the region and we get more phone calls about them than all other species combined.

Other recent records include 2-3 Spotted Shags at the Patea Rivermouth on 6/7 and 1 in New Plymouth Harbour on 9/5. A Kaka has been at King Edward

Park, Hawera, since 25/6. Scaup sightings include 57 at Nowells Lakes (Hawera) on 3/7, 100+ at Lake Mangamahoe on 24/5, and 30+ at Lake Ratapiko on 3/6. There were up to 200 Shovelers at the Hawera water treatment pond in May. Little Black Shag sightings were 13 at the Hawera Lakes on 4/1 and 11 seen flying south along cliffs at the Manawapou River on 4/1. The Black Shag colony at the Hawera cliffs contained at least 12 pairs with young and eggs in September. (Myk Davis)

Manawatu/Wanganui: A beach patrol from Himatangi to Foxton on 6/9 by Mike Tarburton and Sybil and Bob Creswell produced the following: 1 Southern Giant Petrel (the first white specimen of this species on this coast, 1 Kerguelen Petrel, 2 White-headed Petrels, 6 Fairy Prions, 3 Black-backed Gulls, and 6 mappies.

Saddlebacks are a possibility in the Waitotara area of inland Wanganui. G. Randle reports that DOC staff plan to search the area. They will be guided by tramping club members who have reported Saddlebacks in the area on a number of occasions over the years.

The numbers of Spur-winged Plovers continue to increase. Leita Chrstall saw a flock of 78 on the bank of a drain on her Moutoa farm on 1/8.

The latest counts from the Manawatu Estuary were made by the Guest family over the period 24-27/10. In the following list the maximum numbers seen over the period are given: 449 Bar-tailed Godwits, 119 Lesser Knots, 1 Far Eastern Curlew, 20 Golden Plovers, 4 Red-necked Stints, 3 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, 1 Turnstone, 15 Wrybills, 13 S.I. Oystercatchers, 1 Variable Oystercatcher, 6 Royal Spoon bills, 2 Little Terns, 23 White-fronted Terns, 5 Caspian Terns 41 Black-billed Gulls, 65 Black-backed Gulls and 3 Black Shags. It is evident from the list that a good range of waders are present and it looks like we are in for a good summer's viewing.

On 11/10 14 members visited the Santoft Forest in Rangitikei to view swamp and wetland birds. At Lake Koitiata there were: 75 Black Swans (including 4 cygnets), 8 Dabchicks, 3 Little Shags, 1 Black Shag. At the big Waimahora Swamp we saw a pair of Fernbirds and heard another, 2 Paradise Shelducks, 2 Grey Ducks and 2 Pukekos were also noted. Unfortunately the wind made conditions unsuitable for playing/receiving Spotless Crake calls, but the good habitat of the swamp means the crakes and other swamp dwellers e.g. Bittern are almost certainly present. (Lindsay Davies)

Wellington: Beach patrols made during the period late June to 22/8 in the Waikanae/Waikawa area resulted in the finding of 2 Blue Petrels, 2 Fluttering Shearwaters, 7 prion species, 1 Thin-billed prion, 14 Fairy Prions, 5 Diving Petrels, 3 Black-backed Gulls, 1 Magpie, and 1 Pheasant.

Nine members participated in a count at Waikanae Estuary 20/9 when the following birds were recorded: 1 Spur-winged Plover, 4 Banded Dotterels, 2 Variable Oystercatchers, 30 Pied Stilts, 42 White-fronted Terns, 32 Red-billed Gulls, 243 Black-backed Gulls, 2 White-faced Herons, 10 Pukekos, 1 Dabchick, 2 Grey Ducks, 46 Shovelers, 32 Paradise Shelducks, 2 Canada Geese, 2 Grey Teal, 10 Black Shags, 1 Little Shag, 38 Mallards, 61 Black Swans, 3 Harriers, 1 Kingfisher, 30 Starlings 2 Dunnocks, 4 House Sparrows, 6 Skylarks, 2 Yellowhammers, 17 Welcome Swallows, 3 Silvereyes, 2 Blackbirds, 1 Pipit. (Russell Thomas)

West Coast: During the winter wader survey a Wrybill was seen at the Orowaiti by Derek Onley, and a whimbrel was seen in that area a week before the survey. It seems that Wrybills are making a few visits to the coast, this being the fourth that we have recorded. (Stewart Lauder)

Canterbury: Several OSNZ members assisted with a DOC-organised survey of birds on South Canterbury riverbeds during Labour Weekend. Not all results are available yet but the totals include 57 Black-fronted Dotterels on the Opihi and Orari Rivers, and 24 on the lower Ashburton River.

An adult White-winged Black Tern was seen near the Twizel River-Ohau River confluence on 27/9 by Peter Cook.

Andrew Crossland continues to make counts of birds at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary every fortnight. By early November there were over 2000 Bar-tailed Godwits at the estuary and other species noted include 6 Wrybills, 8 Lesser Knots and 2 Turnstones.

In late October Kathleen Harrison was surprised to find 2 Cape Barren Geese at St Annes Lagoon. However, the origin of the birds was soon resolved - apparently the birds' wings have been pinioned and they were released by the Cheviot Wildlife Trust.

Lake Ki-Wainono continues to provide surprises. On 1/11 Richard Maloney saw a Ruff there while he was completing the summer wader count. With a Grey Phalarope in winter there should be no shortage of volunteers to survey this area during future wader counts. (Paul Sagar)

Otago: The first Royal Spoonbills returned to Maukiekie Island earlier than usual this year. Janice Jones reports that 4 had returned by 24/8 and 18 by 4/9. Janice also reports that there were 4 Reef Herons at Moeraki on 21/9.

George and Doreen Grant reported at least 55 Cattle Egrets near Berwick on 22/9. I saw 4 Canada Geese swimming in the Taieri River on 25/9. The first pair of Black-fronted Dotterels had returned to nest on the Taieri River by 30/9. (Peter Schweigman)