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**REPORT ON BIRD BANDING
IN NEW ZEALAND
1991-1992**

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1991-1992**

by

Roderick O Cossee

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CONTENTS

Abstract.....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Methods.....	2
3 Results.....	2
4 Recoveries	3
5 Requests for Information.....	5
6 Acknowledgements	5
Table 1: General Banding Totals	7
Table 2: Banding Totals by Age and Sex.....	13
Table 3: Summary of Year's Recoveries.....	17
Table 4: Summary per Permit	19
Appendix 1: Research Supported by Bird Banding.....	29

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ABSTRACT

During the 1991/92 banding year 22,869 birds of 95 species were banded and 148 previously banded birds were re-banded, bringing the grand total of individual birds banded in New Zealand over the years since 1950 to 1,105,994. Two species previously not banded, Wandering Tattler and North Island Kaka, were banded during the year. A total of 3277 recoveries were added to the computer files. Bird banding supported a large variety of research projects and was regulated by 26 individual permits and 34 institutional/group permits.

1 INTRODUCTION

Bird banding (ringing) is recognised worldwide as an important research tool for both amateur and professional ornithologists. In New Zealand it has been recognised officially as such since 1950, when the Ornithological Society of New Zealand started the first organised scheme. The Department of Internal Affairs soon followed with its own scheme for game bird species. The New Zealand National Banding Scheme as it exists today was initiated in 1967, when the two then existing schemes (run by the Dominion Museum and the New Zealand Wildlife Service respectively) were joined together. Between 1967 and 1987 the scheme was run under the auspices of the Wildlife Service. In 1987 the New Zealand National Banding Scheme was taken over by the Department of Conservation and is now operated and maintained by their Science & Research Division.

The objective of the scheme is to accurately record information about life expectancy and movements of birds. Apart from its value in understanding bird biology, such knowledge is essential for the effective conservation of native species and for management of game birds, as well as for the control of those species that are considered a nuisance.

This report summarises the bird banding activity in New Zealand during the 1991/92 banding season and gives details of some interesting recoveries. Appendix 1 lists some of the research projects which were serviced by the Banding Scheme.

2 METHODS

The totals given are for the period between 1 April 1991 and 31 March 1992. They may include some records for birds banded in previous years, however, as schedules not received in time for inclusion in the 1990/91 report have been included. Similarly, totals relating to the present report year, which were received after the cut-off date for this report, were omitted. Previously banded birds which were re-banded during the year are not included in the totals, nor in Table 1. Details on re-banded birds can be found in Tables 2 and 4.

The naming and order of species in this report is based on the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand (1970 and subsequent amendments and additions). The Ornithological Society of New Zealand published an updated version of the Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand in 1990. The order of species in this new version differs markedly from the earlier published checklists. For the sake of continuity as well as to avoid reprogramming of existing computer programmes we have decided to adhere to the previous edition.

The species code numbers are those used under the Banding Scheme.

Numbers in open brackets are provisional totals and are lower than the actual number banded. This is because actual figures for birds banded during the early years of banding under the Department of Internal Affairs are not known. Figures in square brackets indicate birds banded as an unknown species of a particular genus. These latter are included in Table 1 as they contribute to the total number of birds banded. They are not included in the total number of species banded.

3 RESULTS

During the 1991/92 banding season 22,869 birds of 95 species were banded and 148 previously banded birds were re-banded. Non-game species contributed 20,115 (88%) and game species 2,754 (12%) to the new birds banded. During this report season there was again a decline in the number of game birds banded. Numbers fell from 3,584 in 1990/91 to the present 2,754, a decline of just over 23%. The number of non-game birds increased by 19.3% in comparison with the previous year.

The total number of birds banded in New Zealand increased to 1,105,994 (previously 1,083,125). Of these birds 163,256 (14.8%) have been recovered at least once, while many of them have been recovered on multiple occasions.

The total number of species banded during the existence of the Scheme increased by two to 231, with Wandering Tattler and North Island Kaka being banded for the first time.

The numbers banded for each species are given in Table 1. It should be noted that re-banded birds have been omitted from this table.

Table 2 summarises by age and sex the birds banded during the 1991/92 season. Also included in this table are the 148 birds that were re-banded during the year. They can be found under the heading 'RB'. These birds are included to illustrate the overall banding effort.

Bird banding supported a great number of research and management projects. These are listed in Appendix 1. Numbers in brackets after the project titles are the actual permit numbers.

3 RECOVERIES

A total of 3,277 recoveries were coded and added to the database. Not all these recoveries were received during the report year. A number of these records go back to previous years and are mostly operator recoveries. There is a steadily growing backlog in data input, especially in the non-game sector of these recoveries. All data entry is now done in the Banding Office, while previously this was done by outside agencies.

A large number of recoveries were reported by the general public. The handling of these recoveries has precedence over other recoveries. Where possible, they are dealt with on the day of receipt. All finders are informed of the relevant banding details and receive some additional information on the New Zealand National Banding Scheme. Maximum required turnover time for public recoveries is ten days but even during the hunting season staff managed to process recoveries within a week of receipt.

The Banding Scheme plays a major role as an interface with the public. A quick and efficient response enhances the chance of members of the public sending in bands, as well as keeping up the standing of the Department. As mentioned in a previous report, the New Zealand National Banding Scheme has the fastest response time for public recoveries in the world as well as the highest recovery rate!

Of the 3,277 recoveries processed during the year 1,612 records (49.2%) were for birds recovered dead and 1,665 (50.8%) for birds recovered alive (either actively caught or sight recoveries of birds with individual colour combinations or readable bands). Of all these recoveries 1,124 birds (34.2%) were recovered at least once before.

Of the 1,612 birds recovered dead 1,344 (83.4%) were game and 268 (16.6%) were non-game species. The 1,665 live recoveries consisted of 256 (15.4%) game and 1,409 (84.6%) non-game birds.

The 1,124 repeat recoveries were made up of 339 (30.2%) game and 785 (69.8%) non-game species.

Dead and live recoveries combined for each species group are 1,600 (48.8%) and 1,677 (51.2%) respectively.

At the time of writing the computer files hold records for 163,256 individual birds. The total number of recoveries of these individuals including many re-traps stands at 259,903.

Some notable recoveries are listed below.

Two Northern Royal Albatrosses (*Diomedea epomophora sanfordi*) were recovered at sea in Chile. R-29705 was banded as a chick on 27/9/74 on the Chathams. It was caught in fishing gear off the coast of San Antonio in 1975, the band was removed and the bird released unharmed. This recovery was only recently forwarded to us.

The second bird, R-32148 was found ill near Valparaiso in August 1992. The bird was brought to the Quilpue Zoo; its fate is not known.

Southern Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora epomophora*) R-37156 was banded as a chick on Campbell Island on 19/10/77. It died after flying into the antenna of a fishing vessel at sea north-west of the Falkland islands on 17/8/92.

Over the years 249 Black Petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) chicks have been transferred from Great Barrier to Little Barrier to boost the severely depleted colonies there. Although the success of the operation will not be known until 1994 or 1985, several of the birds have been recovered away from the colonies. H-26987 was transferred to Little Barrier on 10/5/86. It was caught by a fishing vessel off the coast of Paita, Peru in December 1991 and died in the process .

D-134232 a South Island Saddleback (*Philesturnus carunculatus carunculatus*) is another transfer bird. It was originally caught as an adult male on Kaimohu Island and subsequently banded and transferred to Kundy Island on 26/1/78. It was recovered alive on Kundy on 5/3/92.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) B-43893 was caught as an adult male on 18/3/92 at Ward. It travelled to Picton and was killed by a cat on 28/7/92.

L-27544, an Australasian Harrier (*Circus approximans*) banded on 24/3/92 as an adult male in Greytown, was killed by a car in Ashburton on 4/4/92.

A Southern Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus dominicanus*) banded as a pullus (chick) on Somes Island, Wellington Harbour on 28/12/91 was found dead on the beach at Waihou Bay near Cape Runaway in March 1992.

A number of Australian-banded Knots (*Calidris canutus canutus*) were retrapped in the Firth of Thames on 4/7/92. The birds originated from Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland.

Another Knot, C-45638, was banded as an adult on 3/11/90 at Miranda. It travelled all the way to Miaogang Nanhui County, Shanghai, China, and was shot by a hunter.

Finally, Eastern Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica baueri*) Y-3844, which was banded as an adult on 17/12/88 on the Kaipara Harbour, was shot on 12/5/91 in the Northern part of Bering Island, Kamchatka.

The leg-flagging schemes along the East-Asian and Australasian flyways are producing interesting results. In a previous report I mentioned recoveries of New Zealand flagged waders overseas. Here I report some sightings of Victoria banded (and leg-flagged) Bar-tailed Godwits from Karaka, South Manakau Harbour and Miranda, Firth of Thames. Until 1992 there were no recorded movements of this species between Victoria and New Zealand.

Knots have been reported on many occasions from Whangarei, Miranda, the Manawatu Estuary and as far south as Yarrs Flat, Lake Ellesmere. It is now proven that Red-necked Stints (*Calidris ruficollis*) use Australia as a staging post on their way to their wintering spots in New Zealand. Flagged stints were seen on at least five occasions around Lake Ellesmere. The co-operation between the banding schemes along the flyways is very important and the above mentioned results show that the flagging schemes are successful and will provide us with more knowledge and understanding of the migration of many of our birds.

5 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The New Zealand National Banding Scheme has serviced a range of requests for information and analyses in 1990-91, both national and international. Amongst these were an analysis of movements of waterbirds between the North and South Island. Life expectancy analyses were done for several game species. Extensive information on dispersal of Australasian Gannets and various Albatrosses was provided to several researchers in Australia. Raptor and seabird movements were supplied on several occasions and many requests for information on Blue Penguins were honoured.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Mrs G D Tofield for her valued contribution to the administration of the New Zealand National Banding Scheme, to M J Wakelin for technical and field support, and to C J R Robertson for valuable advice during the year.

TABLE 1
GENERAL BANDING TOTALS
(REBANDS EXCLUDED)

SPECIES NUMBER AND NAME	TOTAL PRE 1991	TOTAL 91/92	TOTAL FOR ALL YEARS
001 NORTH ISLAND BROWN KIWI	332	0	332
002 SOUTH ISLAND BROWN KIWI	4	0	4
003 STEWART ISLAND BROWN KIWI	21	0	21
004 LITTLE SPOTTED KIWI	143	0	143
012 YELLOW-EYED PENGUIN	3942	432	4374
026 NORTHERN BLUE PENGUIN	615	0	615
014 COOK STRAIT BLUE PENGUIN	2017	71	2088
016 WHITE-FLIPPED BLUE PENGUIN	11539	640	12179
015 SOUTHERN BLUE PENGUIN	726	177	903
027 CHATHAM ISLAND BLUE PENGUIN	15	0	15
017 ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN	2404	1	2405
019 FIORDLAND CRESTED PENGUIN	619	23	642
020 SNARES CRESTED PENGUIN	2179	0	2179
021 ERECT-CRESTED PENGUIN	43	0	43
041 WANDERING ALBATROSS	3003	198	3201
044 NORTHERN ROYAL ALBATROSS	2482	322	2804
043 SOUTHERN ROYAL ALBATROSS	32671	22	32693
045 BLACK-BROWED MOLLYMAWK	13	0	13
046 NEW ZEALAND BLACK-BROWED MOLLYMAWK	22518	0	22518
047 GREY-HEADED MOLLYMAWK	6382	7	6389
049 BULLER'S MOLLYMAWK	2102	174	2276
050 WHITE-CAPPED (SHY) MOLLYMAWK	561	0	561
052 SALVIN'S MOLLYMAWK	1296	0	1296
051 CHATHAM ISLAND MOLLYMAWK	2	0	2
054 LIGHT-MANTLED SOOTY ALBATROSS	437	0	437
109 NORTHERN GIANT PETREL	1239	0	1239
061 SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL	7	0	7
064 ANTARCTIC FULMAR	2	0	2
063 SNARES CAPE PIGEON	873	0	873
062 CAPE PIGEON	6800	0	6800
093 GREY-FACED PETREL	17375	1740	19115
094 WHITE-HEADED PETREL	31	0	31
095 WHITE-NAPED PETREL	516	0	516
098 MOTTLED PETREL	418	0	418
110 SOFT-PLUMAGED PETREL	20	0	20
100 KERMADEC PETREL	950	106	1056
111 CHATHAM ISLAND TAIKO	41	6	47
101 PYCROFT'S PETREL	642	0	642
102 GOULD'S PETREL	1	0	1
104 COOK'S PETREL	327	4	331
106 BLACK-WINGED PETREL	2768	50	2818
105 CHATHAM ISLAND PETREL	48	1	49
065 BLUE PETREL	1	0	1
066 BROAD-BILLED PRION	1590	0	1590
069 ANTARCTIC PRION	20	0	20
071 AUCKLAND ISLAND PRION	24	0	24
072 NARROW-BILLED PRION	1	0	1
073 FAIRY PRION	43592	0	43592

SPECIES NUMBER AND NAME	TOTAL PRE 1991	TOTAL 91/92	TOTAL FOR ALL YEARS
075 FULMAR PRION	61	0	61
074 CHATHAM FULMAR PRION	2	0	2
089 GREY PETREL	8	0	8
090 BLACK PETREL	846	104	950
091 WESTLAND BLACK PETREL	3477	221	3698
092 WHITE-CHINNED PETREL	31	0	31
077 FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER	1749	33	1782
078 WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER	461	0	461
079 BULLER'S SHEARWATER	1049	0	1049
080 SOOTY SHEARWATER	6728	93	6821
115 CHRISTMAS ISLAND SHEARWATER	1	0	1
082 FLUTTERING SHEARWATER	1787	0	1787
083 HUTTON'S SHEARWATER	1134	0	1134
084 NORFOLK ISLAND LITTLE SHEARWATER	1	0	1
085 KERMADEC LITTLE SHEARWATER	354	0	354
086 NORTH ISLAND LITTLE (ALLIED) SHEARWATER	500	0	500
087 SUBANTARCTIC LITTLE SHEARWATER	5	0	5
--- PRION SPECIES	[4]	0	[4]
121 LEACH'S FORK-TAILED PETREL	1	0	1
123 GREY-BACKED STORM PETREL	775	1	776
124 WHITE-FACED STORM PETREL	6575	0	6575
125 KERMADEC STORM PETREL	1	0	1
126 BLACK-BELLIED STORM PETREL	6	0	6
127 WHITE-BELLIED STORM PETREL	25	0	25
131 NORTHERN DIVING PETREL	7139	0	7139
133 SUBANTARCTIC DIVING PETREL	19	0	19
132 SOUTHERN DIVING PETREL	104	0	104
135 DIVING PETREL (SP.)	1	0	1
--- PETREL SPECIES	[1]	0	[1]
141 RED-TAILED TROPIC BIRD	119	0	119
142 WHITE-TAILED TROPIC BIRD	13	0	13
161 AUSTRALASIAN GANNET	16484	1429	17913
162 BROWN BOOBY	1	0	1
163 MASKED (BLUE-FACED) BOOBY	445	1	446
171 BLACK SHAG	522	0	522
172 PIED SHAG	168	0	168
173 LITTLE BLACK SHAG	954	1	955
174 LITTLE (WHITE-THROATED) SHAG	116	0	116
176 STEWART ISLAND SHAG	2	0	2
179 AUCKLAND ISLAND SHAG	154	0	154
180 CAMPBELL ISLAND SHAG	66	0	66
182 SPOTTED SHAG	457	8	465
216 WHITE-FACED HERON	14	0	14
213 WHITE HERON	2	0	2
215 REEF HERON	52	3	55
220 CATTLE EGRET	1	0	1
218 BITTERN	7	0	7
233 ROYAL SPOONBILL	11	6	17
242 MUTE SWAN	4	0	4
243 BLACK SWAN	(59980)	0	(59980)
241 CANADA GOOSE	(53977)	167	(54144)
245 PARADISE SHELDUCK	(68906)	0	(68906)

SPECIES NUMBER AND NAME	TOTAL PRE 1991	TOTAL 91/92	TOTAL FOR ALL YEARS
252 MALLARD	(89954)	0	(89954)
259 HYBRID MALLARD (CROSS)	(1761)	0	(1761)
251 GREY DUCK	(34225)	0	(34225)
247 GREY TEAL	(1490)	0	(1490)
248 BROWN TEAL	(1746)	51	(1797)
249 AUCKLAND ISLAND TEAL	45	0	45
250 CAMPBELL ISLAND TEAL	3	0	3
253 NEW ZEALAND SHOVELER	(4494)	0	(4494)
254 BLUE DUCK	(202)	27	(229)
256 NEW ZEALAND SCAUP	(107)	6	(113)
--- DUCK (GREY OR MALLARD)	[(13)]	0	[(13)]
272 AUSTRALASIAN HARRIER	4657	223	4880
281 NEW ZEALAND FALCON	47	0	47
296 CHUKOR	2182	35	2217
299 RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE	18162	2065	20227
300 RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE (HYBRID)	42	0	42
298 GREY PARTRIDGE	(14215)	0	(14215)
292 BROWN QUAIL	18	0	18
295 CALIFORNIA QUAIL	(12204)	1	(12205)
293 PHEASANT	(57990)	467	(58457)
331 BANDED RAIL	32	0	32
335 NORTH ISLAND WEKA	3474	0	3474
336 WESTERN WEKA	450	0	450
337 BUFF WEKA	31	0	31
338 STEWART ISLAND WEKA	781	0	781
340 MARSH CRAKE	5	0	5
341 SPOTLESS CRAKE	23	0	23
342 PUKEKO	1880	19	1899
343 NOTORNIS	204	82	286
--- WEKA SPECIES	[1]	0	[1]
401 SOUTH ISLAND PIED OYSTERCATCHER	1502	128	1630
402 VARIABLE OYSTERCATCHER	288	0	288
404 CHATHAM ISLAND OYSTERCATCHER	93	0	93
403 (BLACK OYSTERCATCHER)	101	0	101
411 SPUR-WINGED PLOVER	630	0	630
413 LEAST GOLDEN PLOVER (PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER)	4	0	4
418 NEW ZEALAND DOTTEREL	390	96	486
415 BANDED DOTTEREL	3913	75	3988
422 BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL	72	0	72
419 NEW ZEALAND SHORE PLOVER	433	0	433
420 WRYBILL	2428	14	2442
445 EASTERN BAR-TAILED GODWIT	469	77	546
449 WANDERING TATTLER	0	1	1
451 TURNSTONE	13	5	18
453 CHATHAM ISLAND SNIPE	150	0	150
454 SNARES ISLAND SNIPE	274	0	274
458 KNOT	2833	101	2934
461 CURLEW SANDPIPER	4	0	4
462 RED-NECKED STINT	1	0	1
481 PIED STILT	883	142	1025
482 BLACK STILT	125	4	129
511 SOUTHERN GREAT SKUA	1578	0	1578

SPECIES NUMBER AND NAME	TOTAL PRE 1991	TOTAL 91/92	TOTAL FOR ALL YEARS
512 ANTARCTIC SKUA	2414	0	2414
514 ARCTIC SKUA	1	0	1
521 SOUTHERN BLACK-BACKED GULL	69298	1022	70320
523 RED-BILLED GULL	89540	749	90289
524 BLACK-BILLED GULL	37092	0	37092
527 CASPIAN TERN	5435	34	5469
525 BLACK-FRONTED TERN	1372	0	1372
529 ANTARCTIC TERN	158	0	158
531 FAIRY TERN	9	5	14
532 WHITE-FRONTED TERN	23396	204	23600
533 SOOTY TERN	14654	0	14654
534 COMMON NODDY	4	0	4
535 WHITE-CAPPED NODDY	26	0	26
536 WHITE TERN	3	0	3
537 GREY TERNLET	190	0	190
551 NEW ZEALAND PIGEON	172	2	174
552 CHATHAM ISLAND PIGEON	10	11	21
553 ROCK PIGEON	60	0	60
554 MALAY SPOTTED DOVE	2	8	10
555 BARBARY DOVE	1	0	1
561 KAKAPO	80	1	81
562 NORTH ISLAND KAKA	0	20	20
563 SOUTH ISLAND KAKA	63	6	69
564 KEA	1366	43	1409
566 EASTERN ROSELLA	2	0	2
572 ANTIPODES ISLAND PARAKEET	69	0	69
567 KERMADEC PARAKEET	7	0	7
568 RED-CROWNED PARAKEET	759	9	768
569 CHATHAM IS. RED-CROWNED PARAKEET	1	0	1
570 REISCHECK'S PARAKEET	56	0	56
573 YELLOW-CROWNED PARAKEET	110	23	133
574 CHATHAM ISLAND YELLOW-CROWNED PARAKEET	9	0	9
583 SHINING CUCKOO	70	1	71
584 LONG-TAILED CUCKOO	4	0	4
601 MOREPORK	50	1	51
604 LITTLE OWL	16	0	16
621 NEW ZEALAND KINGFISHER	240	12	252
641 NORTH ISLAND RIFLEMAN	150	0	150
642 SOUTH ISLAND RIFLEMAN	1101	2	1103
646 ROCK WREN	9	0	9
651 SKYLARK	37	5	42
662 WELCOME SWALLOW	321	41	362
741 NEW ZEALAND PIPIT	46	1	47
731 HEDGESPARROW	2174	135	2309
701 NORTH ISLAND FERNBIRD	34	0	34
702 SOUTH ISLAND FERNBIRD	257	0	257
703 STEWART ISLAND FERNBIRD	27	0	27
706 SNARES FERNBIRD	152	0	152
711 BROWN CREEPER	297	0	297
712 WHITEHEAD	345	18	363
713 YELLOWHEAD	124	9	133
714 GREY WARBLER	1031	21	1052

SPECIES NUMBER AND NAME	TOTAL PRE 1991	TOTAL 91/92	TOTAL FOR ALL YEARS
715 CHATHAM ISLAND WARBLER	74	0	74
681 NORTH ISLAND FANTAIL	617	14	631
682 SOUTH ISLAND FANTAIL	865	5	870
684 PIED TIT	175	0	175
685 YELLOW-BREASTED TIT	420	0	420
686 CHATHAM ISLAND TIT	37	0	37
687 BLACK TIT	161	0	161
689 NORTH ISLAND ROBIN	49	16	65
690 SOUTH ISLAND ROBIN	2358	73	2431
691 STEWART ISLAND ROBIN	10	0	10
692 BLACK ROBIN	286	0	286
721 SONG THRUSH	3006	170	3176
722 BLACKBIRD	6874	353	7227
761 SILVEREYE	60256	4699	64955
751 STITCHBIRD	285	45	330
753 BELLBIRD	5975	24	5999
755 TUI	937	24	961
756 CHATHAM ISLAND TUI	1	0	1
775 YELLOWHAMMER	870	157	1027
776 CIRL BUNTING	25	2	27
774 CHAFFINCH	2701	273	2974
771 GREENFINCH	7029	587	7616
772 GOLDFINCH	2564	724	3288
773 REDPOLL	7821	247	8068
781 HOUSE SPARROW	28954	2913	31867
791 STARLING	17832	208	18040
792 INDIAN MYNA	1397	2	1399
821 NORTH ISLAND SADDLEBACK	1679	280	1959
822 SOUTH ISLAND SADDLEBACK	289	0	289
824 NORTH ISLAND KOKAKO	61	10	71
811 BLACK-BACKED MAGPIE	41	0	41
812 WHITE-BACKED MAGPIE	259	0	259
813 HYBRID MAGPIE	25	0	25
-- MAGPIE SPECIES	[4]	0	[4]
802 ROOK	1070	0	1070
*** Total ***			
	1083125	22869	1105994

[] Numbers in square brackets indicate birds of an unknown species of a particular genus.

() Numbers in open brackets are provisional totals. More birds of these species will have been banded but early records do not exist.

Continue to next file: SR59a.pdf