

Birds New Zealand – OSNZ
National Wader Census
June - July 2016
November - December 2016 & January - February 2017
Summary compiled by Adrian Riegen

Winter Census 2016

A total of 124,744 waders of 20 species were counted during the June - July 2016 wader census, (Table 1), up from 118,337 in June - July 2015. There was good national coverage other than the key Far North sites of Parengarenga, Houhora and Rangaunu, which were not counted. Parengarenga was not counted in 2015 either. Numbers of red knot were up again from 2015 with 1,763 counted and bar-tailed godwit numbers were up from 7,781 in 2015 to 9,997 (call that 10,000) in 2016. South Island pied oystercatchers were holding steady with 77,951 and wrybill numbers were up from 4,112 to 4,675.

Rarities included, 1 marsh sandpiper, 1 Hudsonian godwit, 1 lesser sand plover and a single shore plover was seen on the Manukau Harbour.

Summer Census 2016

A total of 128,236 waders of 26 species were counted in the November - December 2016 wader census, (Table 2), down from 137,020 in 2015. National coverage was again very good, although only a partial count was conducted at the key site of Parengarenga. The big differences were the red knot, at their lowest number since 2009 with 27,338. The bar-tailed godwit count was down 2,000 from 2015 with just 72,702, the lowest count since 2006, when some important areas were not counted. Certainly one of the lowest counts on record, if not the lowest. Turnstone numbers were up considerably from 992 in 2015 to 1,712 in 2016. The increases were in the Kaipara and Manukau Harbours and Farewell Spit. The Far North count of 267 was well up on the 2015 count of 2, when there was poor coverage.

Uncommon waders included, 1 great knot, 2 pectoral sandpipers, 1 grey-tailed tattler, 1 wandering tattler, 1 greater sand plover and 1 grey plover.

NOTE: Species listed in the following tables are arranged in the order they appear in the fourth edition of the OSNZ checklist.

Table 1. Total Count June - July 2016

Species	2014	2015	2016
Red Knot	947	1,214	1,763
Red-necked Stint	64	7	8
Whimbrel	3	4	10
Bar-tailed Godwit	8,816	7,781	9,997
Hudsonian Godwit			1
Grey-tailed Tattler			1
Marsh Sandpiper	1	1	1
Ruddy Turnstone	362	159	206
Variable Oystercatcher	3,014	3,270	3,145
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	79,381	77,886	77,951
(Oystercatcher Hybrid)	20	11	3
Pied Stilt	17,282	15,506	17,841
(Black Stilt/Hybrids)	23	17	8
New Zealand Dotterel	780	1,083	1,041
Banded Dotterel	5,860	5,482	5,993
Lesser Sand Plover			1
Wrybill	4,108	4,112	4,675
Black-fronted Dotterel	162	101	128
Shore Plover	2	3	1
Spur-winged Plover	1,975	1,696	1,970
Total	122,822	118,337	124,744

Table 2. Total Count November - December 2016

Species	2014	2015	2016
Red Knot	28,940	34,226	27,338
Sanderling	3	7	3
Curlew Sandpiper	15	9	6
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	3	6	16
Pectoral Sandpiper	3	1	2
Red-necked Stint	79	95	134
Far Eastern Curlew	3	5	7
Whimbrel	24	13	45
Bar-tailed Godwit	74,989	74,838	72,702
Wandering Tattler	2		1
Grey-tailed Tattler		1	1
Marsh Sandpiper	2		1
Ruddy Turnstone	1,562	992	1,712
Variable Oystercatcher	2,278	2,306	2,493
South Island Pied			
Oystercatcher	16,625	15,484	17,291
(Oystercatcher Hybrid)	4	10	9
Pied Stilt	4,367	5,471	3,818
(Black Stilt/Hybrids)	3	8	2
Pacific Golden Plover	75	253	112
Grey Plover	1	2	1
New Zealand Dotterel	483	649	522
Banded Dotterel	530	521	613
Greater Sand Plover		2	1
Wrybill	141	216	102
Black-fronted Dotterel	7	23	18
Spur-winged Plover	1,206	1,880	1,286
Total	131,350	137,020	128,236

There was incomplete nationwide coverage in January - February 2017 but counts from Parengarenga, Aotea Harbour, Nelson, Canterbury and Southland were received. Numbers for Southland and Canterbury are compared with the November - December 2016 counts in Tables 3 and 4. The Nelson counts were not available at the time of this report.

Table 3. Southland Region counts for November 2016 and February 2017

Species	Nov.16	Feb.17
Red Knot	6	249
Sanderling	1	1
Red-necked Stint	51	49
Far Eastern Curlew		1
Bar-tailed Godwit	1,875	1,766
Turnstone	168	314
Variable Oystercatcher	22	26
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	693	866
Pied Stilt	49	281
Pacific Golden Plover	7	12
New Zealand Dotterel	3	27
Banded Dotterel	26	135
Greater Sand Plover	1	1
Wrybill		2
Spur-winged Plover	33	23

Table 4 Canterbury counts for November 2016 and February 2017

Species	Canterbury Regional sites		Avon-Heathcote Estuary		Lake Ellesmere	
	Nov.16	Feb.17	Nov.16	Jan.17	Dec.16	Feb.17
Red Knot	8				5	42
Sanderling						1
Curlew Sandpiper					6	4
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	6				13	1
Pectoral Sandpiper (Cox's Sandpiper)						3 1
Red-necked Stint					40	45
Far Eastern Curlew	1	1				
Whimbrel	2					
Bar-tailed Godwit	666	489	1,437	1,507	77	182
Ruddy Turnstone	2			1	25	7
Variable Oystercatcher	65	60		67	1	
South Island Pied Oystercatcher	206	1130	475	3,090	12	18
(Hybrid Oystercatcher)	9	15				
Pied Stilt	520	1559	49	122	948	2,821
(Black Stilt/Hybrid)	1	6			1	2
Pacific Golden Plover					17	15
Banded Dotterel	34	458			347	2,831
Black-fronted Dotterel	4	4				
Wrybill	2	16			23	291
Spur-winged Plover	204	150	38	65	199	259

Tables 5 and 6 show sites with > 2,500 waders counted during winter and summer censuses.

Table 5. Sites with >2,500 waders in June - July 2016 & 2015

	2016	2015
Manukau Harbour	32,137	30,712
Kaipara Harbour	22,468	23,773
Firth of Thames	18,588	13,164
Farewell Spit	14,451	8,431
Tasman Bay	5,162	5,042
Golden Bay	3,801	6,165
Kawhia Harbour	3,569	2,849
Tauranga Harbour	3,035	3,559
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	2,572	3,252

Table 6. Sites with >2,500 waders in November - December 2016 & 2015

	2016	2015
Kaipara Harbour	29,402	32,083
Manukau Harbour	21,460	24,997
Farewell Spit	17,389	20,923
Firth of Thames	8,752	8,846
Tauranga Harbour	6,871	6,945
Tasman Bay	6,368	6,165
Whangarei Harbour	4,762	5,668
Golden Bay	4,564	3,995
Rangaunu Harbour	2,905	-
Kawhia Harbour	2,736	2,447
Ohiwa Harbour	(2,034)	2,662
Avon-Heathcote Estuary	(1,999)	2,807

Adrian Riegen
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