



NEW ZEALAND WADER STUDY GROUP

In association with

Miranda Naturalists' Trust

Newsletter No 16

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COMMENT

I must start by apologising for the long silence. Various events have conspired against a newsletter appearing since April 2000 and that one was cut short due to an electronic glitch. Hopefully we are back on track. The good news is that Tony Habraken, one of our most experienced waderologists will be going to South Korea in early May at the invitation of the Koreans along with Ken Gosbell from Victoria to assist in the counting and monitoring of migrant waders including New Zealand Bar-tailed Godwit that pass through that region on northward migration. A full report of the survey will appear in the next issue of Miranda News.

WADER BANDING 2000-2001

Eight catches were made using mist and cannon nets at Miranda and Karaka. Several attempts at Jordan's on the Kaipara Harbour were aborted due to bad weather or the birds executing their well rehearsed vanishing trick the day before banding was scheduled.

Banding Results April 2000 to March 2001

Species	New	Retraps
Bar-tailed Godwit	73	9
Wrybill	69	9
Pied Oystercatcher	65	1
Red Knot	46	2
Turnstone	7	2
Banded Dotterel	2	0
Pied Stilt	1	0
SUB TOTAL	263	23
TOTAL	286	

Since banding commenced in 1979, 14,916 new birds of 13 species have been banded. 1,739 have been retrapped by the Miranda Banders and NZWSG, 33 have been recovered overseas and 72 have been recovered in New Zealand. Also 823 Bar-tailed Godwit, 1,369 Red Knot, and 70 Turnstone have been fitted with a single white leg flag.

Totals 1979 - 2001

Species	New	Retrap	Recovered Overseas	Recovered New Zealand
Red Knot	6012	156	28	4
Wrybill	4345	1525		44
Pied Oystercatcher	2494	26		22
Bar-tailed Godwit	1828	24	4	2
Turnstone	111	4	1	
Banded Dotterel	69	0		
Curlew Sandpiper	19	2		
New Zealand Dotterel	16	2		
Pied Stilt	15	0		
Red-necked Stint	3	0		
Pacific Golden Plover	2	0		
Terek Sandpiper	1	0		
Variable Oystercatcher	1	0		
Total	14916	1739	33	72

RECOVERIES: and other birds of interest.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

072-06394, banded at Bishops Is, Brisbane on 21.10.90 as a 1 st year bird was caught at Miranda on 21.10.00 exactly 10 years to the day after banding.

Bar-tailed Godwit have shown a good deal of site fidelity in the retrapped birds banded since 1986. Although they have been banded on the Kaipara Harbour (462), Manukau Harbour (125), and the Firth of Thames (1190) all 15 retrapped birds have been from the original banding site.

RED KNOT

C-22369, banded at Miranda 08.06.80 and retrapped there two months later on 17.08.80, was caught alive but died at Moskalvo, Sakhalin Island, Russia 53°38'N 142°31'E in August 1983. The news of this bird finally reached us in October 1999!

C-55135, banded at Miranda 20.10.96 was hunted at Perevolochny Bay, near Magadan on the Sea of Okhotsk, Russia 59°38'N 154°15'E in July 2000, 10,950 km from the banding site, presumable as it was preparing for the flight back to New Zealand.

052-02888, banded at Swan Is, Queenscliff, Victoria 38°15'S 144°40'E on 27.01.00, was mist netted at Karaka on 24.02.01. This was the 26th Red Knot banded in Victoria and recovered in New Zealand verses one knot banded in New Zealand and recovered in Victoria. Thoughts of a brain drain come to mind!

PIED OYSTERCATCHERS

Like the Bar-tailed Godwit all I S retraps have been from the original banding sites, but the 22 recoveries come mainly from the South Island breeding grounds.

TURNSTONE

D-168804, an adult banded at Karaka-Manukau H. on 04.03.00 was retrapped at the same site 28 days later on 01.04.00. It had gained 28 grams in the 28 days and weighed 188 grams. New Zealand Turnstone may be the heaviest on the flyway prior to migration. Although the sample sizes are quite small, 15 birds weighed between 23 March and 8 April had a mean weight of 174 grams and 5 birds weighed between 1 April and 8 April had a mean weight of 180 grams. They could therefore be carrying enough fuel for a 6,000km flight, well beyond Australia, possibly New Guinea and the Philippines.

Two Turnstones were caught on that night, both were retraps. The second birds was banded at Karaka on 26.10.96.

A juvenile Turnstone banded in South Australia (with colour leg flags) was seen at Miranda on 30.12.00 by Will Perry and again in early February 2001 by Tony Habraken, who read part of the metal band number combination with his trusty telescope, enabling individual identification.

The bird in question was banded on 13.12.00 (17 days before first sighting at Miranda) at Brown Bay in South Australia, 5kms from the border with Victoria. About a third of the Turnstone caught that day had above average weights so it was suspected that they were still on their southern migration and the thinking at the time was that

they were heading for Tasmania. One at least obviously wasn't! it is interesting to note that migration was still taking place in mid December.

WRYBILL

Always more complicated to sort out, due to regular retrapping and replacing of excessively worn bands. On the night of 31.03.01, 26 new Wrybill and 9 retraps were caught at Miranda. Three retraps could not be identified as the bands were too worn. The other six were all banded at Miranda, two in 1992, two in 1993 and two in 1997.

Another interesting Wrybill recovery was:

B-52393, banded as an adult female on the Cass River, South Island 44°00'S 171°30'E on 24.09.85 by K. Hughey. It was caught and rebanded B-65088 at Miranda on 25.07.93 by NZWSG and then found dead by M. Midgley beside Lake Tekapo 44° 17'S 170° 12'E on 04.09.00 aged at least 17 years.

WHICH GODWITS AND KNOTS COME TO NEW ZEALAND?

Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit are the two most numerous Arctic waders visiting New Zealand and it is generally thought that the *nogersi* subspecies of Knot breeding on the Chukotka Peninsula of eastern Siberia and the *baueri* subspecies of godwit from Alaska are the ones reaching New Zealand.

We have been looking more closely at the two species in the Auckland area since Pavel Tomkovich was here in March 2000. He was convinced Red Knot from the New Siberian Islands were also reaching New Zealand, based on slight differences in the breeding plumage and departure strategies. Most New Siberian Island birds are thought to migrate to northwest Australia, and there was little evidence of them moving from northwest Australia to southeast Australia and New Zealand.

Since the leg-flagging scheme got underway, yellow flagged Red Knot from northwest Australia have been turning up in New Zealand. Two were caught at Miranda on 06.01.99, but we were unable to detect any difference in plumage between them and other knot of the same age caught that day. Exactly how many different birds have come from northwest Australia is hard to say.

The following sightings are a selection covering all sites where yellow flagged knot have been recorded in New Zealand and may represent a minimum number of individuals although the two seen at Karaka in August

1999 could have been those caught at Miranda in January 1999, as they were not adults at that time, and were unlikely to return to Siberia in March 1999. However, they could well have moved to the Manukau as knots are known to do.

Date	Qty	Site
18.10.96	1	Mangere, Manukau H.
22.11.98	1	Mangere, Manukau H.
15.08.99	2	Karaka, Manukau H.
26.12.99	1	Tapora Sth, Kaipara H.
06.01.99	2	Miranda, FoT
16.11.97	1	Manawatu Est, Manawatu
06.02.98	1	Te Whanga Lagoon, Chatham Is.
29.11.98	1	Avon-Heathcote Est, Christchurch
16.01.00	1	Takahiwai, Northland
02.12.00	1	Mangawhai Spit, Auckland

Adding to the theory that some birds come from the New Siberian Islands are the two Red Knot C-45469 and C-46826 recovered in central Yakutia, Russia, which were almost certainly on their way north to the New Siberian Islands.

C-4_5469, an adult banded at Jordan's-Kaipara H., 36°30'S 174°20'E on 23.02.89 and C-46826 an adult banded at Jordan's-Kaipara H., on 07.03.93, were both recovered in Yakutia, Russia 68°40'N 143°30'E on 30.05.99 by E Syroechkovski. 11,950km from banding site and on a direct flight path to the New Siberian Islands.

Bar-tailed Godwit in the Australasian region are now generally considered to belong to two subspecies, *baueri* from Alaska and *menzbieri* from northeastern Siberia. The former found predominantly in southeast Australia and New Zealand and the latter in northwest Australia. The most obvious difference visible in the field is the whiter rump of *menzbieri*

The godwits at Yalu Jiang (northern Yellow Sea, China) in the second half of May 2000 showed very distinctive white rumps and the only leg flags seen were yellow, from northwest Australia. A year earlier at Yalu Jiang in early May godwits flagged in southeast Australia, Queensland and New Zealand were present. Although no comments were made about the rump colour at the time, they were likely to have been *baueri* godwits heading for Alaska. The Alaskan coast becomes ice free earlier than northern Siberia, so Alaskan godwit seem to pass through Yalu Jiang earlier in the season.

Looking closely at godwits in New Zealand, it is possible to see that a few do have whiter rumps. The NZWSG had hoped to catch a good number of them to investigate

this but were unable to do so this year.

There are just nine records to date of yellow flagged Bar-tailed Godwits in New Zealand. As godwit appear to be fairly site faithful, it may well be that yellow flagged birds return here year after year. If that is true, then these nine records may represent only 3-4 individual birds.

12.12.93	1	Jordan's, Kaipara H. S Hayes
12.03.97	1	Papakanui Spit, Kaipara H. G Pulham
20.10.96	1	Miranda, FoT D Lawrie et al
09.11.96	2	Miranda, FoT K Woodley et al
03.03.97	2	Miranda, FoT S Davies
30.11.97	1	Miranda, FoT K Woodley et al
28.02.98	1	Miranda, FoT T Habraken
25.10.98	1	Miranda, FoT W Perry et al
11.02.01	1	Thames, FoT C. Care

There is still much to be learnt about the Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit that come to New Zealand and keen observers can help by looking more carefully for plumage differences.

ASIA ACIFIC MIGRATORY SHOREBIRDS LISTSERVER

An email listserver has been established for shorebirds in the Asia Pacific region. The aim is to provide a forum for non-government organisations, government organisations and individuals with an interest in the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia Pacific. The discussion group is supported by Environment Australia as part of the initiatives for the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia Pacific region.

In establishing the listserver it has been recognised that there are several global email forums. The Asia Pacific Migratory Shorebird Listserver differs from these global forums (e.g. Waders-L and the Ramsar Forum) in that it seeks to maintain a regional focus on migratory shorebirds. The listserver will enable people to share information on shorebird migration, resightings of colour marked shorebirds, site conservation issues, the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network and support implementation of shorebird conservation activities.

To subscribe send an email to apmw@erin.gov.au The subject line should be left blank and text of the message should be: subscribe migwaterbirds

If you require further information please contact Doug Watkins, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Wetlands International - Oceania: doug.watkins@ea.gov.au

